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The Work
of the
Holy Spirit

The Work of the Holy Spirit

4931

Thirteen Sermons

With an Appendix containing Notes for Bible Readings

By

S. C. Lowry, M.A.

Vicar of North Holmwood, Dorking

Third Edition

London

Skeffington and Son, Piccadilly, W.

MDCCCXCV

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Preface.

THIS book is not a formal treatise; it is simply a collection of Sermons preached on various occasions. They are arranged, however, with some degree of method, and repetition is as far as possible avoided. The importance of the subject, and the comparative paucity of sermons on what has been called "the forgotten truth" are the author's reasons for publishing. Some, it is hoped, may care to read these Sermons who would shrink from studying a more elaborate and exhaustive treatise.

Frequent references are made herein to Bible texts, and thus this volume may possibly provide material for Bible readings. In many Churches a course of addresses on the Holy Spirit would form after Easter a useful preparation for Whit Sunday.

Many of the ideas and phrases are taken from other writers, but it has been impossible to remember the source in every instance. The author, however, is specially indebted to Mr. Moule's "Veni Creator," Archdeacon Hare's "Mission of the Comforter," and Mr. Gore's essay in "Lux Mundi."

The first five Sermons were preached as a consecutive series. An Appendix has been added with notes for Bible study, which may be expanded into Addresses.

May He, Whose blessed work these pages attempt to illustrate, grant His blessing to the readers, and lead them to a fuller knowledge of all spiritual truth.

S. C. L.

North Holmwood,
February, 1894.

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"And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's Baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

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The Work of the Holy Spirit.

I.

THE GIVER OF LIFE.

S. John vi. 63.
"It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

Rom. viii. 2; Rev. xi. 11.
"The Spirit of life."

"I HEARD yesterday a sermon on the Holy Spirit. It is a subject on which, I fear, you clergymen do not preach as often as you might."

This was said to me some time ago by an aged layman, and I am prepared to acknowledge the justice of the reproof. We do not speak, we do not think as much as we might do, or as much as we ought to do, on the Holy Spirit of God. There are very few hymns in honour of the Holy Spirit. There are very few Churches dedicated to the Holy Spirit. There are very few sermons, except on Whit Sunday, upon the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the reason of this paucity of sermons may be the difficulty of the subject. We can readily conceive the ideas conveyed by the words "Father" and "Son," but it is hard to think of One proceeding from Both, and yet equal in the Divine

Godhead. An age that is nothing "if not practical" regards such reasonings as a kind of dreamy mysticism, which may be interesting to theologians, but which does not affect the practical workings of every-day life.

And yet, if we neglect the Holy Ghost, the loss is ours; if we despise Him, the peril is ours. This is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and to ignore Him is to ignore what is most vital to its well-being. It is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost that is the unpardonable sin.[1] To live without Him is to live without Christ.[2] Let us then dwell on this most important subject, asking that He of Whom we speak may deign to bless the words spoken in His name. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and nowhere is this spiritual discernment more needed than in the study of the Person and Work of the Blessed Comforter.

We will think of Him to-day, in the words of a familiar Creed, as the *Giver of Life*, and

1. First of all, let us take a very wide view. Let us think of His operation in *Nature*. It is no doubt in the Christian Church that the Spirit of Life appears in His most vigorous, most intense, most abundant working; but His sphere is wider than any limits of ecclesiastical order, wider even than humanity itself. *All* life is the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Wherever," says S. Ambrose, "the Holy Spirit is, there is also life; and wherever life is, there is also the Holy Spirit."[3] In fact, throughout the world, with its countless, teeming life—vegetable, animal, human—everywhere there is the great vitalizing activity of God the Holy Ghost.

[1] S. Matt. xii. 31. [2] Rom. viii. 9. [3] De Spiritu Sancto, i. 15, 172.

At the very beginning of Creation, for instance, we read that "the Spirit of God moved upon the waters,"[1] and through the long millennial stages of the world's evolution we can well believe that He was the principle of life and movement. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."[2] Have we thought of this? We are apt to regard the Holy Spirit as the possession of a few saintly souls, while we forget that all around us are sacraments of God.

When you stand some summer evening on the shore and watch the grand expanse of purple and sapphire sea, with the white sea gulls skimming its surface and the red cliffs towering above it; when your eye strays upwards to the heavens with their infinite depths of blue and crimson and golden-green, have you ever thought that you owe this panorama of loveliness to the Holy Spirit of God? Why is the flower living and growing? Because the Holy Spirit is breathing upon it. Who gave the little insect its wondrous variety of colour? The Holy Spirit of God.

And when at last God made man, when He first gave expression to His own invisible nature in human form it was the Divine inbreathing that wrought that supreme masterpiece. As Elihu has said, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."[3] Human life, in a higher degree, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is well we should think of this. It is a crippled view of God and nature which would "confine God to a little

[1] Gen. i. 2. [2] Ps. xxxiii. 6. [3] Job xxxiii. 4.

corner of Palestine." His mercy is over *all* His works, and *wherever there is life, there is also the Spirit of Life.*

2. We will turn to a *higher* operation of the Comforter. We have seen Him in His world-wide ministry as the Life-giver. We have noticed different degrees of life—vegetable, animal, human.

In *Human* life, too, there are various kinds of life. There is the life of the body, and the life of the mind,[1] and the life of the soul; and it is in the life of the soul that the Life-giver finds His intensest and grandest energy.

All of us, probably, will agree that there is such a thing as *spiritual* life. We cannot define it, we cannot analyze it, any more than the philosopher can define or analyze our natural human life. But it is there; we feel it, we see it, we recognize it by its fruits. You have known some character—it may have been in the halls of the great, it may have been in the cottages of the poor—possibly there was nothing outwardly remarkable, the person was not very learned, and not very clever, but there was a sweetness, a brightness, a gentleness, a beauty and a grace in that character which struck you as coming from no earthly source. It was a life whose motive was not self, but self-sacrifice; that fulfilled unnoticed and unapplauded the daily round of daily duty; that bore with unfaltering love not only its own inevitable trials, but the sorrows and burdens of others; that was a ceaseless outpouring of sympathy, an unflagging energy of goodness. This

[1] For the action of the Holy Spirit on the intellect, see Ex. xxxvi. 1, 2, where He gives the inspiration of skill to Bezaleel the architect.

life—whence is it? How shall we describe it? You ask them what it is, whence it comes. They cannot perhaps give you any definition; but they will tell you it is something they have *received.* It is not their own, though it dwells in them. It comes from above and it comes from God. They will tell you how it has upheld them in hours of need, how it has calmed them in hours of success, how it has strengthened them to face temptation, how it has braced their wills to do the difficult task and say the difficult word. In the words of an Apostle they will answer, "The life which we now live we live through the faith of the Son of God, Who loved us and gave Himself for us." And further, if we turn from these characters, from these saintly souls which shed a fragrance o'er the commonplaces of life, to the one Book which lifts the veil and discloses the hidden workings of an unseen Power; if we turn to the New Testament; if we turn to the words of Him Who shed the light of eternity on the deepest problems of human existence—what do we find? We find that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came, as He Himself claimed, not merely to give a code of morals, a philosophy, a creed, but to give *a life,* a new and vital force in the world, a life as real and distinct as any other form of existence, and this life was in Christ, and comes from Christ, and from no other. Our Saviour, in fact, made a claim, which no one else has ever dared to make. Others taught sublime moral truths; others formulated powerful religious systems. But Christ did more. He came not only to tell of a higher life, but to give it. "I am

the Life."[1] "I am come that they may have Life, and have it more abundantly"—such was invariably His language. "I am come not simply to discover it, or to reveal it, or to illustrate it, or to strengthen it; but I am the Life itself, and without Me the soul is dead."[2]

Let us be clear on this point. *Christ is the life of the soul.* So He taught Himself. This idea fills and saturates the writings of His earlier followers. "Christ is our life." "He that hath the Son hath life."[3] Their life, their highest life, is not their own, but it comes from God. It is communicated to them, and they live it by faith. That life is Christ; it consists in union, real and abiding, with the Eternal God, as revealed in His Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But the point to be noticed is this—that while the life is Christ, *the life-giver is the Holy Ghost.* It is He Who brings the new life of grace, and implants it in the soul. It is He Who forms the bond of union between our souls and God.[4] He is called the "Spirit of Christ,"[5] because it is His office to reveal Christ. He communicates to us the incarnate life of the Second Adam. He ploughs the ground and prepares the soil. He inserts the seed, and waters with the dew of His grace. Here—often noiselessly and secretly—not in the blaze of publicity, but in the hidden home of each man's heart, the work is done; the Spirit of Life is there, breathing new aims into the soul, bracing the

[1] S. John xiv. 6; x. 10; vi. 48, etc.

[2] The writer is indebted for some suggestions in the above to a sermon, "The Origin of the Christian Life," by Bishop Magee, in the *Gospel of the Age*, pp. 164-6.

[3] Col. iii. 4; 1 John v. 12. See Westcott, Epistles of S. John, on "The idea of life," pp. 204-208. [4] 1 Cor. vi. 17. [5] Rom. viii. 11.

sluggish will, convincing of the secret sin, purifying and ennobling the whole nature by the communion of Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. You do not see the Spirit; you do not see the wind; but you feel His presence; you recognize His work; you see His fruits in characters dead to the world, but alive to God.

But if you ask further *when* and *how* the mystery of the new life first begins within the soul, when and how the Spirit first quickeneth into life,[1] the answer must be that the origin of spiritual life, like the origin of all life, is difficult to define. When our Lord speaks to Nicodemus of being "born of water and the Spirit," all the early writers, without exception, connect this passage with Baptism, and I doubt not that in the ideal Christian life the first inbreathings of the higher life date from that sacrament. For Baptism is according to the Bible and Prayer Book "an effectual sign of grace . . . a sign of regeneration or new birth,"[2] and not merely a registration or a token of Christian profession. The Church is the body of Christ, the covenanted home of the Spirit, and even the humblest member of that body stands in a higher state of privilege than the greatest in the older dispensation.

It is not presumption to teach a little child that God gave him the Holy Spirit's grace in Baptism, nor should we shrink from using the words of S. Paul, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body."[3]

And yet—we cannot, we dare not confine the grace of the Holy Spirit to Baptism. The Holy Ghost is not

[1] "Life in all its forms . . . is confessedly a mystery." Professor St. George Mivart, *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1879.

[2] Articles xxv. and xxvii. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

tied to sacraments, and He can dispense with them if He will. "Where the Spirit is, there is liberty." He "bloweth where He listeth."[1] There is a freedom, an independence, a sovereignty, a mystery in the Holy Spirit's working which cannot be measured by rule.

The more practical question for us to ask is not so much—this life, when does it come; but *is it ours?*

"Alive unto God," does that describe *your* condition? Is *your* life glowing with the life of God? Are *you* seeking that the Spirit of life may increasingly raise you from the low levels of worldliness and sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Alive or dead—which is it? alive to God—alive to love and hope and duty? or dead—dead, like a withered branch, dead as a cold, hard stone, dead as a corpse which neither speaks, nor hears, nor feels?

Oh, we have need to pray the Holy Spirit to revive and quicken us. O Spirit of life, breathe on each soul here that it may know its Saviour and rise from the lethargy of sin. O Spirit of life, rouse our drooping spirits and quicken our sluggish wills. O Spirit of life, kindle in us more and more the love of Christ our Saviour, and make our hearts Thy home, true and living temples of Thee. O Spirit of life,

> "Send forth Thy quickening breath
> And wake dead souls to love and praise,
> Thou Vanquisher of death."

NOTE.—There is a further mystery of the Spirit of life, which may be added here to give completeness to what has been already said. It is the operation of the Holy Ghost in the Resurrection life. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.)

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17; S. John iii. 8.

II.

THE CONVINCER OF SIN.

S. JOHN XVI. 8.

"And when He is come, He will reprove (*R.V.* convict) the world of sin."

WHO is this? Who is this mighty person who will undertake this transcendently difficult task, and who will have the world for the field of his operation?

He is the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, that most real and most powerful Worker, Whom no eye can see and no ear can hear, but Whose presence is felt and known in the hearts of living men and women.

Let us dwell a moment on this point. Our Saviour, you observe, does not say, "*It*," but "*He*" will convict the world of sin. He uses a very definite pronoun, and He uses it in the masculine, not the neuter. Often we think and speak of the Holy Spirit as an influence that secretly emanates from God, like an aroma from a flower; or we speak of Him as a power, like the unseen force of the electric fluid. But the Holy Ghost is more than an influence or a power. He is a Person, Who performs *personal* actions, Who testifies, comforts, and intercedes—a Person, Who can be resisted, blasphemed, and grieved.[1] You cannot grieve an influence; you

[1] Acts vii. 51; S. Matt. xii. 31; Eph. iv. 30; Heb. x. 29.

cannot blaspheme a force. Words such as these can only be used of a *person;* and such our Saviour proclaims Him to be when He says of the Holy Spirit, "*He* shall convict[1] the world of sin."

We have already thought on the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of life." We will now think of Him as the Spirit of contrition. Our subject is the Holy Spirit the Convincer of sin.

Now when we speak of this office of the Holy Ghost, we do not mean to imply that men did not feel or know their sins before Pentecost, nor do we ignore that God uses other means to awaken a guilty soul. There is, for instance—

1. *The voice of Conscience.* What is Conscience? It is difficult to say precisely; but we may define it as an instinctive self-knowledge, an internal looking-glass, a secret witness within the soul, which not only tells a man what he ought to do, but admonishes and chastises him when he has done wrong. We all know something of Conscience. Heathen writers knew much of Conscience. They heard its whisper when duty was doubtful, and felt its remorse when they had yielded to the thoughts and acts of shame.

And yet, we need something more than Conscience to convict the world of sin. Conscience varies according to education and circumstance. Conscience is so often slighted by habitual neglect, and crushed by reiterated violation, that its voice is hardly heard. Conscience "seldom takes notice of habitual sins;" it chiefly makes

[1] The word "convict"—variously translated as "reprove, convince," etc.—is complex in its meaning. It includes the revelation of sin, and the application of guilt. See Westcott's note on S. John xvi. 8.

note of new and unaccustomed faults. "The drunkard, does he not know that he is sowing the seeds of disease, blighting his happiness, and ruining his prospects? Yes, he knows all this, and yet he does not drink a single glass the less."[1] He is so accustomed to the habit that his Conscience does not trouble him any more.

Nor does Conscience alone convict us of that main sin of the world, the sin of unbelief. There have been "conscientious unbelievers." S. Paul was strictly conscientious when he persecuted the Christians of Jerusalem.[2] No, brethren, if we rely on Conscience alone to convict of sin, the sin of faithlessness and unbelief, we are relying on a support which will sometimes fail us. Conscience will not alone convince us of sin, as it appears to God, or bring us to the feet of the Crucified.

2. There is also *the Law of God.* This, too, may be, to a certain degree, a "convincer of sin." When God appeared in the thunders of Sinai, and the people quaked in fear before His Presence, He gave them the outward witness to the majesty of Law—the Ten Commandments—not printed in ink delible and transitory, but graven in stone, permanent and enduring.

The Law was a voice that spoke of the sinfulness of sin, and it spoke in a voice stern and cold as death. All down the ages that unflinching, inexorable Law of God has cried out against sin, and the man who has been taught the Commandments, and who knows that he has broken them, knows also that he is guilty of sin, for "By the Law is the knowledge of sin."[3]

[1] Hare. *Mission of the Comforter*, from which the general outline is taken.
[2] Acts xxvi. 9; xxiv. 16. [3] Rom. iii. 20.

And yet the Law failed to convince the world of sin. The Law mainly took notice of outward acts; it made men dread sin for fear of punishment; it did not always touch the secret springs of will; it did not make them shun sin because of its own hatefulness. Men, like the Pharisees, obeyed the Law; yet in their inner hearts they broke it. S. Paul, as touching the Law, was "blameless;"[1] yet when the Holy Ghost revealed Christ in him he calls himself "the chief of sinners."[2] Another witness is needed beyond the Law—a witness that will search the heart and discover its hidden sores, a witness that will mingle with our spirits, and impart something of the Divine hatred of sin. This is the witness that is needed, and such God sent at Pentecost to convict the world of sin.

3. The Holy Ghost, then, is the great Convincer of sin. It is His work to teach mankind what sin really is; to lay it bare in all its loathsomeness and vileness; to show it, "not as it flashes forth from our neighbours' actions, but as it smoulders in our hearts;"[3] to prove that it lies at the root of our nature, flows through our veins, and is mingled with our life-blood. This, we repeat, is the Holy Spirit's work. No human teacher can do it; Conscience cannot, the Law cannot, even the Gospel cannot do it. Only when the Holy Spirit, like a piercing sword, cuts down our pride and lays us low before God, is man truly convinced of sin.

Not that the Holy Spirit dispenses with those other witnesses which we have mentioned. *The grace of God generally works through our natural organs, and*

[1] Phil. iii. 6. [2] 1 Tim. i. 15. [3] Hare.

not in spite of them. The Holy Spirit does not dispense with Conscience; He acts through it; He fans and quickens it into flame, until it lights up the dark chambers of our hearts, and reveals the hidden spots and stains. The Holy Spirit takes the Law of God, and illumines it till the characters seem to glow with fire. He takes the Gospel, and He makes the story of Divine love a living reality to the soul which receives it. No Christian will despise his Conscience. No Christian will make light of the Word of God. Both the Conscience and the Word are vehicles of reproof, of correction, of instruction; but neither of them achieve what they are destined to do without the Holy Ghost.

The day of Pentecost was the advent of this great Convincer. A new power—not new in essence, but new in the extent of its influence—came down upon the world. A solitary man, strong in the might of this supernatural endowment, stood up and told the multitude of their sins in crucifying the Lord of life. What happened? The arrow of conviction pierced them. The multitude was "pricked to the heart."[1] As a hurricane passes over a cornfield, and every stalk is bowed and laid low by the blast, so, when the Spirit of God passed over that vast concourse of men gathered from all parts of the world, they were bowed, they were crushed, and everywhere, from more than a thousand lips, was heard the cry of anguish and contrition, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? What shall we do to be saved?"

So it was on Pentecost. So it has been in many

[1] Acts ii. 37.

subsequent revivals of religious life. So it is again and again in the spiritual history of men and women to-day. You had done many things which you knew to be wrong, you were living a life which was simply a drifting away from God, but your conscience was asleep and you felt no alarm. But the Spirit came and touched your heart—it may have been in the fervid enthusiasm of a Mission Service, it may have been in the silent hours of bereavement—and you saw your sin, as you had not seen it before. You were startled; you were ashamed; you were brought to your knees in penitence and prayer. The Holy Ghost, in short, convinced you of sin. Ah, there is nothing more needful than to see sin in its true colours. May God, the Holy Ghost, convince us all; for it is His especial work!

4. But, observe further that *one specific sin is here singled out.* "He shall convict the world of sin . . . . of sin, *because they believe not on Me.*' Why does our Saviour single out this particular sin? Why does He specify the sin of unbelief? Is it not because unbelief is the great sin of the world? Is it not the sin that more or less underlies every other sin? The world may think lightly of the sin of unbelief. It may look with lenient eyes on the infidel and the scorner, while it reserves its censures for the pickpocket and the cheat. But this is not God's estimate. In the sight of God, wilful, persistent distrust of Him is the worst sin. It is the sin that is the parent of all other sins. Would you, could you be guilty of that dishonesty, that impurity, that disobedience, if at the time your faith

in the omnipresent, all-seeing God were strong and clear? Was it not unbelief, or at least forgetfulness of God, that led you to yield to the Tempter? And does not unbelief reach its crowning-point when it rejects and scorns the God Who died to save us? I look at the Cross, and I see there the revelation of infinite love. On that Cross I see my God stretching out His arms as though He would embrace the world. I see Him pouring out His life unto death in order that by so tremendous a sacrifice He may reconcile man to Himself. Surely if there be one sin more inexcusable than another it is that we should refuse, that we should despise such love. But this was the sin of the Jews. Jesus had come to them, the Son of God manifest in the flesh, He had walked in their streets, taught in their synagogues, healed their sick, and raised their dead. The Jews had no cloak for their sin, when they "crucified the Lord of life."

And, dear friends, is not this the great sin of which a large portion of the world is guilty still? Many have each their own particular sins, but God's indictment goes deep to the great root-sin, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life."[1]

My brother, my sister, is this your sin—that Christ has died for you, and you will not believe in Him, will not trust Him, will not love Him? If so, may God the Holy Ghost convince you of your sin. May He, the Mover of all hearts, show you how ungrateful, how terrible, how fatal it is to spurn such love as this. May He show you your need of a Saviour, and lead you in

[1] S. John v. 40.

penitence to His pierced feet. It must be the Spirit's work. None other can do it. But, if you yield to His drawing, if you seek His guidance, He will teach you what you need. For now, as of old, He comes to convince the world of sin.

III.

THE AUTHOR OF HOLINESS.

ROM. I. 4.

"The Spirit of holiness."

ON John Wesley's monument in Westminster Abbey there are, inscribed upon the pedestal, three sayings of the great preacher, which have become historical. The first is, "I look upon all the world as my parish;" the second, "God buries His workmen, but carries on His work;" while the third, the utterance of his dying hour, is, "The best of all is, God is with us."

I do not know the precise sense in which these last words were spoken; but I know that it is part of the Holy Spirit's work to give us that blessed assurance. He comes to tell us not only that God is *with* us, but that God is *in* us. It was our Saviour's glorious promise that the Comforter should dwell *with* and *in* His people.[1] In fact they should be gainers by His departure.[2] Christ known through the Spirit should be a larger, higher, truer, more abundant Christ than any Christ they had known in the flesh—"not a Christ of now and then, not a Christ of here and there," but a Christ with them every moment, and in every place.

[1] S. John xiv. 17. [2] S. John xvi. 7.

The Spirit, He taught them, would witness with their spirits in closest and most intimate union; and when hearts were faint, and the journey long, and the work difficult, they would be able to say with a confidence unknown before, "The best of all is, God is with us."

The aspect of the Holy Spirit's work before us to-day is—the Holy Spirit, the Author of holiness—and here we are touching on His chief and most obvious characteristic. Any child instructed in the Catechism will at once tell you that the Holy Spirit's office is "to sanctify him and all the elect people of God." Indeed, He is universally called the *Holy* Spirit, not only because of the unspeakable holiness of His nature, but because He is the Author and Agent of holiness, wherever He comes to dwell. *Sanctification*[1] *is His especial work*, and by sanctification we mean that inwrought holiness of character and life, which gives colour to our thoughts, shines forth in our actions, and speaks in our words.

There are two great processes in the training of the soul for Heaven, which are known respectively as Justification and Sanctification.

Justification is that process whereby the soul is accepted in Christ, covered with His righteousness, and freely pardoned for the sins and iniquities of the past. *Sanctification* is not so much the soul in Christ, as Christ in the soul. It is the correspondence of the inner life with its outward position. It is that holiness of character and thought and life which is

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2.

the fruit of the indwelling of the All-holy One. Through Justification we claim our part in the atoning Death of Christ. By Sanctification we are endowed with the living energy of His Risen Life.

In *both* these processes the Holy Spirit is the agent. We are "*justified* by the Spirit of God."[1] It is the Holy Spirit Who convinces of sin and points to the Saviour. He it is Who kindles the love of Christ in the penitent soul, and reveals the fulness of His atoning Sacrifice. All true knowledge of Christ and Christ's work for us comes through the Holy Spirit of God.[2] He is the "Spirit of Faith,"[3] Who gives the faith, and inspires the faith, that believes and trusts and knows, the justifying faith which is no mere conventional acceptance of fossilized dogmas, no mere hysterical transport of an effervescent enthusiasm, but the conscious, intelligent, trustful repose of the soul on Him Who is its only sufficient Saviour and support.

But while the Holy Spirit may be said to be the unseen agent in our Justification, it is Sanctification, according to the Catechism, which is His especial work; and this Sanctification is both *negative* and *positive*. You will remember that the Holy Spirit is symbolized by water; and water, we know, is typical of cleansing.

> "Let the water and the blood,
> From Thy riven side which flowed,
> Be of sin the double cure,
> Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

Fire, too, is an emblem of the Spirit, and fire is used

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 13.

to purify. Both these illustrations indicate what we may call the *negative* work of the Spirit—the subtle cleansing of the soul from the defilements of the past, the purification of our natural lusts and longings.

But yet, the Holy Spirit's work is mainly *positive*. His aim is so to fill us with His presence that there may be no room for these guilty imaginings; so to reveal in us the love of Christ that He may wean us from what is low and base by "the expulsive power of a new affection." *The Holy Spirit does not act alone.* Where He comes, He brings Christ. He is "the Spirit of Christ." He implants Christ in the soul and makes the Christ to grow and develop in us.[1] He is the agent in that vital and mysterious union which S. Paul so marvellously describes when he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ which liveth in me."[2]

In the days of Trajan there lived a Saint of God named Ignatius, who sealed his testimony with his blood. Ignatius was commonly known as *Theophoros*—or the Bearer of God. I imagine that there was such a pre-eminent holiness, such a supernatural sanctity in his character that he seemed to be a kind of incarnation of the Divine life.

The title given to Ignatius is one to which every Christian, who is faithful to his calling, may in some degree humbly lay claim. He is a Theophoros, a God-bearer. Christ dwells in him and he dwells in Christ.[3] Christ is "in him the hope of glory."[4] Not only when he comes fresh from the Eucharist,

[1] See Moule, *Veni Creator*, chap. ii. [2] Gal. ii. 20.
[3] S. John xv. 5. [4] Col. i. 27.

though then he can scarcely forget it, but everywhere and at all times Christ is his life and he is a temple of God. *But where there is this indwelling we must acknowledge and adore the work of the Holy Ghost.*

The want of the Church to-day is Saints. There are thousands to-day who are both baptized and confirmed; but they are not holy. I am not speaking of the utterly careless and godless; I am thinking of those who frequent our Churches, and worship at our altars. There are numbers among the fashionable world of to-day who are ready to lend the patronage of their names to religious institutions; but they are not holy. Many are even willing to speak for Christ and to teach about Christ; but "the utterances are too few which come from sitting at His feet or leaning on His breast." We want—not less activity, but—more inner life, more devotion, more meditation, more communion, more prayer. The need of the Church is Saints. Christ is calling for witnesses, and the witness that is most effectual is the witness of a holy life. Is it not so? Is not character the best of sermons? Does not the quiet consistency of a devoted Christian man or woman speak with an eloquence more powerful than words?

Such lives we may have known. Perhaps you can remember one in your own family circle, a Christ-like soul, so bright and placid, so schooled into holiness, that the very countenance seemed to speak of a conscience unsullied and unstained, of a character where every turbid and uneasy fancy had been expelled, and the clear, deep heart was left to mirror forth the light

from the face of God. Of such a one the poet[1] was thinking when he wrote—

"The blessing of her quiet life
Fell on us like the dew;
And good thoughts, where her footsteps pressed,
Like fairy blossoms grew.
Sweet promptings unto kindest deeds
Were in her very look;
We read her face as one who reads
A true and holy book."

What, you ask, is the secret of such a life? It is, we answer, the power of holiness, and it is imparted by the Holy Spirit of God.

My brothers, my sisters, partakers with me of a holy calling, remember, I pray you, that He Who hath called us, hath called us to holiness.

Remember it in your lonely hours, when dark, unbidden thoughts thrust themselves on your unwatching soul; remember it in the mirth, in the glitter of society, and pray that there you may be kept pure and unspotted from the world. God is calling for Saints, and without holiness no one can see Him now, or enjoy Him hereafter.[2]

O let us seek to-day the aid of the Holy Spirit! He it is Who implants holy thoughts, and prompts holy actions, and teaches holy truths. He it is Who lifts us above the low levels of earth into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. He is the "Spirit of Holiness" Who, as of old, is given in answer to earnest, believing prayer, and

[1] Whittier. [2] Heb. xii. 14.

"Every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone."

But, while we seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, *we too must do our part.* We must not leave all to the Spirit, and take no trouble ourselves. How can we expect to be holy, if we seldom read our Bibles, or if we are careless and irregular in our prayers? How can we make progress in grace, if we put ourselves in the way of wicked thoughts and impure suggestions, if we read books and frequent society of doubtful character? Can we touch pitch and not be defiled? Can we play with fire and not be burnt? Can we lie down in slime and not be soiled? No, brethren, no; the Holy Spirit will not help us *in spite* of ourselves. The Lord, Who sends the Holy Spirit, says also, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off." Much need have we to sweep the house, and clear out of it all that hinders the grace of God, if it is to shelter so august and so Divine a tenant. Indeed the reason of so much failure in spite of many earnest strivings after a better and holier life, is that we have not the courage to cut at the roots of some secret sin, which, like some noxious weed, is choking the Word, and rendering it unfruitful.

We must do our part: but we must do it by the grace of God. Much will have been gained if we go away to-day determined to make a prayer for the Holy Spirit the rule of our daily life. Whatever hesitation

we may have about some prayers, there need be none in this. "If ye, therefore, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."[1] These are our Saviour's words. They are a promise, not only for the whole Church, but for each and every member. When read in the full knowledge of the outpouring at Pentecost they come to us with the certainty and assurance of an accomplished fact.

Be hopeful, my brethren. Our need is great, but the supply is greater. With every earnest aspiration, with every brave effort, with every devout prayer the Heart of God beats in sympathy. "Our duty is to trust; His duty is to bless." God is not a hard task-master, but a loving Father, Who wills His children's happiness. Holiness is happiness, and the holiest men are the happiest; for they belong to that kingdom which is not only righteousness, but "joy and peace in the Holy Ghost;"[2] and though trials and sorrows may overshadow their path, and though often they bemoan the distance that separates them from the goal, still they know that God the Holy Ghost is their Comforter and their Guide, and with confidence and hope they can look up to Heaven and say, "The best of all is—God is with us."

[1] S. Luke xi. 13. [2] Rom. xiv. 17.

IV.

THE TEACHER OF TRUTH.

S. JOHN XIV. 17.

"The Spirit of Truth."

OUR blessed Lord, before His departure, promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His Church. For the *world* His chief mission would be, as we have already seen, to convince of sin:[1] but for the *Church* He should come as Comforter, Advocate, Helper, Guide, and Teacher. The Spirit of Life and the Spirit of Holiness should also be the Spirit of Truth, to guide the servants of God into all the Truth.

We will think then, to-day, of another aspect of the Holy Spirit's work—the *teaching office of the Comforter.*

And surely we must all feel that we need such a Guide. Life is so full of mystery. Religion has so much that is bewildering and difficult to understand, that often we seem like men caught in a mist, who can see but a few paces before them, and scarcely know which way to turn. Is it not so? Have we never known the time when duty seemed so hard and God so far off that we felt there was nothing to be done but just to drift, borne helplessly onward by the great tide of the world around us, like leaves on the surface of a

[1] S. John xvi. 8.

stream? Ah, we need a Teacher, a Guide, who will reveal to us what no human counsellor can teach us.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach spiritual truth. How does He teach us?

The most obvious answer is that the Holy Spirit teaches us in giving us those Holy Scriptures, profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, which alone can make us wise unto salvation.

The Bible is the Holy Spirit's masterpiece. If there be one thing more than another which it teaches of itself it is that it claims to be inspired by the inbreathings of the Holy Spirit of God."[1] "There are two wonders," says M. Godet, of Neuchatel, "in comparison of which all others sink into insignificance. The one is the Incarnation of the Word, which is Jesus Christ; the other is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit, which is the Bible." In the Bible, as in the Babe of Bethlehem, we have the meeting of the Divine and the human. On the one hand it is the Word of God, wherein a supernatural revelation flashes forth on the thought and affections of men; on the other hand it is a human work, the product of human hands and human minds. The Bible has led a charmed life. In spite of scorn and infidelity it lives on "unchanged, unchanging, old without decay." It has been translated into almost every known tongue. Not only is it treasured by the simple and unlearned, but some of the greatest intellects of our age have spent their lifetime in its study. The Bible can never become obsolete; it can never be

[1] 2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 16; where the right reading is, "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable," etc. The distinction is important.

superseded, because it imparts the knowledge which transcends all others, and outlives all others—the knowledge of God and Eternal Life.

No one, I think, can intelligently and reverently study the Bible without feeling that it bears the marks of a supernatural revelation. Here is a Book, not like the Koran the product of a single brain compiled within the short compass of a man's lifetime, but a Book, or rather a library of seventy or more books stretching over a period of a thousand years, by writers speaking in succession along a vast line of time, without means of contact; and yet all combine unconsciously to one end, lock like parts of a machine into one system, conspire to the unity of a very elaborate scheme, without being at all aware of what was to come after.

"Here, for instance, is one living nearly 1600 years before the last in the series, who lays a foundation (in reference to man's ruin and God's promises and plan for human restoration) which is built upon and carried forward by all, without exception, that follow. Here comes a multitude that prepare each for his successor—that unconsciously integrate each other—that finally when reviewed make up a total drama, of which each writer's separate share would have been utterly imperfect without corresponding parts that he could not have foreseen. At length all is finished; a profound piece of music, a vast oratorio, perfect and of elaborate unity has resulted from a long succession of strains, each of itself fragmentary. On such a final creation, resulting from such a distraction of parts, it is indispensable to suppose an over-ruling inspiration in order at all to

account for the final result of a most elaborate harmony." [1]

More than this—the religious student sees that the Bible, as no other book, finds its way to the human heart, deals as no other book with the most perplexing problems of human experience, warns the hypocrite, rouses the indifferent, raises the fallen, comforts the sorrowful, cheers the weak, gives peace to the dying, as no other book ever has done or can do. When a key fits an intricate lock we may infer that the one was made for the other. When a book, like the Bible, meets and satisfies the deepest longings of the soul, we may reasonably suppose that He Who made and fashioned man is also the Architect and Designer of its pages. "He Who made me, made this book," said a Chinese student, when he had just finished writing a translation of the New Testament. As he read the Old, old Story of Jesus and His Love, and saw how completely it met his own case, his interest was aroused. He felt—and all who seriously think on the subject must feel it too—that the correspondence between his own needs and the good news of the Gospel was too remarkable to be simply fortuitous. The book, he argued, must have a supernatural origin. It could only be the work of One Who had fashioned human nature, and implanted its desires and longings.

And this is our faith. We believe that the Bible is God's Book. The *unity* of the Bible is the unity of the one Spirit Who pervades and permeates its several parts; the *consolations* of the Bible are the

[1] De Quincey, Essay on *Protestantism*.

consolations of the blessed Comforter; the *truths* of the Bible are the teaching of the Spirit of Truth.

When, however, we go on to ask *how* the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, whether His Divine superintendence precluded error and shortsightedness in the writers, whether or how far we can claim infallibility for each record, the answer is difficult. At the present time the question of the character and degree of inspiration is specially prominent, and very varied opinions are held in different quarters. However much we may deprecate the rash conclusions of some modern critics, we must welcome every honest effort to unravel a difficult subject, and we must re-adjust our views, if necessary, where they are proved to be faulty.

Very few, I imagine, will now hold the theory of *verbal* inspiration in its old form, *i.e.*, that every word of every phrase is infallibly inspired. We have learnt to see that the authors occasionally quoted from memory without verbal accuracy or literal exactness. We have learnt to see that some Old Testament books are compilations from preceding writings, and that others have been enlarged after the authors were dead. We notice occasional discrepancies, which no ingenuity can reconcile. We are beginning to recognize a gradual growth in inspiration. No one now would place Ecclesiastes on the same level with S. John's Gospel, or the morality of the Proverbs with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, if every Old Testament writer was equally with the Apostles the vehicle of the Spirit, it would be difficult to see the reason of the fuller outpouring of Pentecost.

Let us not shrink from investigation, nor be too ready to suspect devout men whose views differ from our own. Harsh words are not arguments, and "zeal for the Word" is sometimes only the mental indolence which prefers a cheap and ready formula to the patient search of truth and substitutes fierceness of invective for thoughtful and persuasive reasoning. It is possible to concede something where concession is necessary, and yet, notwithstanding, to maintain as stoutly as ever that here in the Bible is the Word of God, here is the Spirit of God, here is the vision of the Eternal, now in shadowy gleams, now in startling glimpses, at last in the "express image" of His countenance, that whosoever reads may live.

Dear brethren, have you considered this marvellous provision for human need? Have you thought how God has given and preserved the Bible to be our comfort and our guide?

For if God has given us a Bible, He has also given us a Church,[1] "the habitation of God through the Spirit." Many people overlook this fact, and set up a rivalry between the Bible and the Church. But such action is neither warranted by logic nor by history. It is through the Church that the Bible has come to us. The Church of early days, taught doubtless by the Spirit of God, was the Editor of the Bible, and compiled the books we now possess. The Church has been the Guardian and the Keeper of the Word. The Church has summarized the main facts and doctrines of the Bible in her Creeds to be the rule and standard of her

[1] See Sermon VI. *infra.*

children's faith. What God has joined together let no man put asunder. The Church, doubtless, is not infallible; but it were at least ungrateful to ignore our indebtedness to those who, in difficult and dangerous times, have handed down to us the Deposit of Truth.

The Bible is the guide-book of the Spirit. It leads us to Calvary, and from Calvary onward to the New Jerusalem. But spiritual truth, remember, is spiritually discerned,[1] and we must seek the Spirit's aid to interpret its pages. The music learner needs not only the score of the music: he needs the musical spirit. The artist needs not only the copy and the model, but the artistic genius to absorb and apply the principles he has learnt. In divine matters we need not only the text-book, but the power of assimilation—not only the Truth, but the Spirit of Truth.

"Have you got an illuminated Bible?" says Mr. Spurgeon, in one of his addresses; "I do not mean a large family Bible with pictures and splendid engravings, but a Bible illuminated by the Holy Ghost; for you may read to all eternity, and learn nothing, unless it be illuminated by the Spirit." Mr. Spurgeon is right. "If there is praying in the Holy Ghost, there is also reading in the Holy Ghost."[2] Then it is that certain passages become "luminous" to the soul. To use a common phrase, they "strike" us. We read them, ponder them, mark them, digest them, and, consciously or unconsciously, they become part of ourselves. In hours of sorrow and difficulty their memory returns,

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 12-14. [2] Dean Pigou.

like a whisper from Heaven, to be our comfort, our strength, and our guide.

There are other ways in which the Spirit of Truth teaches us—in Conscience, in Providence, through the Ministry, through the help and assistance of Friends. But I have preferred to dwell on His first and chiefest channel.

May God grant us to accept the Spirit's teaching with humility, obedience, and faith. "When I was young," writes S. Augustine, "I studied the Bible with shrewdness of disputing and not with meekness of enquiry, and thus I shut the door of the Holy Spirit against myself with my own hands."[1] If we come with minds full of ideas, full of prepossessions we shall take away simply what we bring and nothing more; for it is to humble, simple, childlike trust that God reveals His will. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. That which I see not, teach Thou me. Open mine eyes that I may behold the wondrous things of Thy law"—let words such as these be our prayer, and thus shall we be taught of God. Thus a light from Heaven shall shine around our path; thus we shall find comfort in sorrow, help in danger, strength in weakness, guidance in perplexity. For God the Holy Ghost will shed abroad more and more in your hearts the knowledge and love of God; He will make to you Christ and the Christian life a great living reality; He will lead you to the Cross, and beyond the Cross, along the steep and narrow path of duty, until at last you reach

"The bright inheritance of saints
Jerusalem above."

[1] S. Augustine's Sermons, LI.

V.

THE SECRET OF POWER.

ACTS I. 8.

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

THE "power" here mentioned is not authority; it is *force*. I do not mean to imply that the Apostles had not authority given them. There are abundant passages which show that authority of a distinct and definite kind was bestowed upon the Apostles.[1] But the power which our Lord promises *in this passage* means not authority, but force. The original Greek word is embodied in our words, "dynamite, dynamics." It indicates energy, strength, vigour, as opposed to weakness, apathy, dulness: and this power, this energy, this force, is here connected with the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

When we look round us and trace the history of our times, there are few things more striking than the marvellous increase of working power which has come to us. In the last sixty years we have gained the knowledge of altogether superhuman force. Whereas in bygone years a journey from Edinburgh to London took three days, now we are whirled along at the rate

[1] S. John xx. 23; Matt. x. 1; where the word translated "power" means authority.

of fifty miles an hour; while our words are read in print at the other side of the globe almost as soon as they are uttered. How has all this come about? Are our limbs swifter, or our voices more powerful? Nothing of the kind. The physical strength of the race is no greater than it was at the beginning of the present reign. How is it, then, that we, whose limbs are no swifter, can travel at a rate undreamt of before; how is it that we, whose voices are no louder, can send our words with lightning speed to the uttermost parts of the earth?

Is it not this—that we have learnt to know and believe in certain great silent forces, such as electricity and heat? Is it not that, though we cannot see these forces, yet we feel them, we know them, and we use them for our purposes? And is it not thus that, utilizing a strength and an energy not our own, we have been able to "tunnel through the mountains, to girdle the earth with our messages, and to sweep the ocean with our fleets."[1]

Now, as we believe in the unseen forces of Nature all around us, so we believe that we live and move in the presence of a great unseen moral and spiritual Power, and this is the Holy Ghost. When I say the Holy Ghost is a Power, I would guard from misinterpretation. The Holy Ghost is a *Person*, not a blind force—a Person Who thinks and wills and feels. But still the energy of the Holy Spirit is power, and in the strength of that Spirit men are powerful, and in the energy of that

[1] "Power to Let" (White Cross Tracts. Hatchards), from which the illustration above is adapted.

Spirit they have moved the world and accomplished the impossible. We have thought of other aspects of the Comforter's work; let us think of Him to-day as the *Source of spiritual power.*

As we turn for guidance to the teaching of our Lord and Saviour, we find that He has associated the Holy Spirit with *three* of the great motive forces of the world. According to our popular definitions there are four elements; three of them are active—air, fire, and water; one of them, earth, is passive. You will observe that each of the *active* elements is used by our Lord to describe the work of the Holy Spirit. Now, if we take these three elements, collectively or separately, we find that, whatever else they may indicate, they convey the idea of power.

One of our great scientific teachers,[1] in a Presidential address before the British Association, has lately dwelt on what he calls the "prime movers" in Nature, and of these he specified in the order of discovery—wind, water, and fire. These, you will notice, are precisely the three motive forces with which the Holy Spirit is compared in the Gospels.

1. Our Lord likens Him to the *wind.* "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[2] Indeed here, as elsewhere, the very name of the Spirit is air or wind.[3] Now wind is the simplest form of

[1] Sir Frederick Bramwell at Bath, 1888. [2] S. John iii. 8.

[3] The word *pneuma* in the above text—S. John iii. 8—is variously translated "wind" and "Spirit."

power. The windmill existed before the watermill, and the sailing vessel before the steamship. We do not see the wind, but we hear its sound. You sit in your house on a stormy night, the windows are curtained, the doors bolted and barred, and you hear the melancholy wail of the gale without. You go into your garden in the morning, you find your shrubbery stripped, and the flowers bruised and battered, and you say, "See what the storm has done!" *The impression left on your mind by the wind is the idea of power.*

2. *Water*, too, is a power. When the practical American stood by Niagara, and saw that ceaseless torrent of water, his first exclamation was, "What power is here!" It was not the beauty or the grandeur of the scene that impressed him, but the possible value of the water as a motive force, if only it could be utilised for practical purposes. Water is a power; a power so great that sometimes it has hurled blocks of granite as though they were pebbles, and twisted iron girders as though they were matchwood.

And the Holy Spirit is connected with water. When our Lord spoke of being born "of water and the Spirit,"[1] the main thought may be of cleansing, but there is also the latent idea of power. At least this is the idea in S. John vii. 38, where He says, "He that believeth on Me . . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," to which the Apostle adds, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." The gift of the

[1] S. John iii. 5.

Spirit, He implies, should be a fertilizing energy which, issuing from spiritual souls, should animate and gladden the parched soil around.

3. *Fire* also is a power. Fire acting on water makes steam, and we all know the power of steam. But heat is even a greater power than steam, and the steam engine is being superseded by the heat engine. We have seen that the Holy Spirit's energy is compared with wind and water. We will readily remember that it is also compared with fire. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost *and with fire*"[1] — was the prophecy of John the Baptist. The allusion is not merely to the cleansing and kindling properties of fire. It speaks of the *power* of fire; and when in the great convulsion of the first Whit Sunday every forehead was anointed with visible celestial flame, the outward sign was an emblem of that new endowment of spiritual power, which our Saviour had promised to His waiting disciples.

We see, then, that in those three great primary motive forces—air, water, and fire—the Holy Spirit finds His type and emblem. If the Bible had been written in our own days, the writers would probably have found an additional emblem in electricity. You cannot see the Holy Spirit; you cannot see wind, or heat, or steam, you cannot see the viewless electric fluid. But, like those great natural forces, the Holy Spirit is felt in the working, and seen in the results. In the strength of that power lived and died the earliest champions of the faith. The Spirit of God dwelt in

[1] S. Matt. iii. 11; *cf.* S. Luke xii. 49.

these despised Galileans, and "they turned the world upside down."[1] He drove home the preached word with such force that self-satisfied worldlings and scornful unbelievers were bowed to the ground, crying in tears of anxiety, "What must we do to be saved?" He gave such reality to their baptism that men, women and children became there and then partakers of a new supernatural life. So Christianity spread, not in the strength of its prestige and popularity, not through the patronage of the great, or the suffrages of the many, not because of the eloquence of its preachers or the wisdom of its apologists; but mainly because its members were strong in the intensity of indomitable convictions, convictions which were armed with penetrating force through the unseen power of God the Holy Ghost.

My brethren, this is a *practical* subject. How is it that we seem to have so little power, either for our own improvement or the improvement of others? How is it that we are so continually saying these miserable words, "I can't?" "Ah," says some one, "it is quite true. I ought to be better—I ought to make a stronger stand against my besetting sin; but I can't make myself different from what I am. You see, circumstances are against me. My society is unfavourable; my work is uncongenial. It is hard——"

Well, brethren, we know that temperament and circumstances must be reckoned with. It is not the same thing if a man has been born of saintly parents, or springs from those who have transmitted to him

[1] Acts xvii. 6.

a hereditary craving for that which is his poison. It is not the same if our lives have been surrounded by sweet and healthy influences, or if we have lived in the fœtid atmosphere of a worldly and godless home. Doubtless the struggle is harder for some than for others. But are we so helpless after all? You say, "I can't make myself different," and thus far you are right. But can you not lay hold on those great unseen spiritual forces that lie around you? Can you not open your heart to that Divine Guest, Who longs to make His dwelling there? Can you not ask Him Who giveth liberally and upbraideth not to pour the Holy Spirit into your hearts? Before we say "impossible," let us ask ourselves whether we are using the appointed means of grace, whether we are taking into our calculation that unseen, mysterious Energy of God the Holy Ghost; whether we remember our Lord's own promise to His disciples, "Ye shall receive power from on high?"

Power! we need it for ourselves, we need it for others. Not for themselves chiefly were the Apostles endued, but for the sake of others. "Ye shall receive power . . . . and *ye shall be witnesses unto Me.*" Is not God calling for witnesses to-day? Look at the world around you. You need not think only of the millions of heathen living and dying in ignorance of the common Saviour of all. Look at your own country. Think of the sins and sorrows of our own land, in which we take so much honest pride. Think of the 60,000 who are annually sinking into a drunkard's grave. Think of the army of fallen temptresses who, once pure as your

daughters, are sliding deeper and deeper down the social abyss. What shall we say of the terrible contrasts of our social life, with its wealth and luxury and glitter on the one hand, and its poverty, its monotony, its squalor on the other? Are there no mountains of pride and arrogance to be levelled and brought low? are there no valleys of ignorance to be raised to a higher level? What shall we say of the streams of putrid literature that are poisoning the very life-blood of the nation? Men and brethren, *the world needs witnesses for Christ.* We must not be content to sing "Hold the fort;" we must *take the forts* of wickedness and sin. And how shall we do it, how can we hope to do it, if we are satisfied with a Christianity which is simply good-natured and respectable and gentlemanly, when it should be vigorous, robust, and daring?

The world will not be regenerated by men who simply work in the strength of good intentions, but by those who are impelled by power from on high. How was it that S. Peter, the faint-hearted renegade, was empowered to brave the whole hierarchy of Jerusalem? He was "filled with the Holy Ghost."[1] What made S. Barnabas to be a true "Son of consolation" wherever he went? He was "full of the Holy Ghost,"[2] and, possessing the Comforter himself, he was enabled to bring comfort to others.

My brethren, the task before us is great, the labourers are few, the time is short, and the Master is urgent. But, in humblest dependence on the grace of God, let

[1] Acts iv. 8. [2] Acts xi. 24.

us go forward to bear our witness for the Lord, to uplift His banner before the world, to prepare for the coming of the King. Only let us always remember that He Who said "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me," said first, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

VI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH.

EPH. II. 22.

"Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

IT is a matter for deep thankfulness that the thoughts of Christian people are now again, after long neglect, being turned increasingly towards the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. There is, for instance, a Union, of which the condition of membership is that all who belong to it shall pray daily for the outpouring of the Spirit. In various parts of the country "Conventions" are held, where the aim and object of the meetings is to seek and experience more thoroughly the fulness of the Spirit. We may not be altogether in sympathy with these Conventions; we may disagree with some of their teaching, and recoil from many of their methods; we may think their system of interpretation fanciful, and fear that while they are held ostensibly on the broad basis of including members of various Christian communities, they may in reality tend to a rather un-Catholic exclusiveness. But at any rate the *aim* is laudable, for they aim at deeper and fuller spiritual experience; and if it be true that many are helped and strengthened in their inner life by such meetings, and if it be true that many have gone forth

from such Conventions to face danger and death in the Mission field, we will try to think of the actual good rather than the possible harm, and we will gratefully recognize those yearnings after a higher spiritual life, of which these meetings are the outward expression.

But we meet here to-day not as a convention, or a congregation, but as a *Church*. We are assembled here in the House of God as members, true or false, of that body which we call Christ's Holy Catholic Church. Now one great aspect of the Church is this—that it should be *the dwelling-place of God*. "Ye are the Temple of God," writes S. Paul to the Corinthians, "and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. . . . . The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are." And again to the Ephesians, in the passage from which the text is taken, he writes, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone; in Whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."[1] If, then, we have any love for our Church, any love for our parish, we must pray that we may increasingly realize that great ideal, "a holy temple in the Lord . . . a habitation of God through the Spirit."

The Church of Christ, like her Master, is at once Human and Divine. It is, it must be, intensely human and humane, busying itself with human needs and

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; Eph. ii. 19-22.

human longings, if it is to touch the great heart of the world. It must also be Divine. The Church is not merely a philanthropic institution; it is a community with a Divine life, and only as that Divine life is manifested and felt can men be really and permanently raised to a higher level. The Church is "the Body of Christ," and it becomes the Body of Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit.[1] Read your Bible, read your Prayer Book; in either case you will notice how the Holy Spirit's work is recognized in the moulding of the great Society, and the building of the great fabric. Whether in service or in sacrament, in worship or in work, the Holy Ghost is the unseen, yet most real agent, Who communicates the Divine life to the members of Christ, and Who silently vivifies the Church's ordinances, that they may be real and effectual means of grace.

Take, for instance—

1. *Baptism.* The early Christians did not look on Baptism simply as a form or a registry. They regarded it as a "putting on" of Christ. They applied to it the words "regeneration," and "new birth." They spoke of men being "born of water and the Spirit." "By one Spirit," says S. Paul, "are we all baptized into one body."[2]

I am afraid that this may seem to some to be a more exalted view of Baptism than our observation of the baptized would generally warrant, and it *may* be that, amid a faithless and perverse generation, the grace of a sacrament may be partially withdrawn. When

[1] 1 Cor. xii. [2] Gal. iii. 27; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

parents bring their children to the font simply "to get it done," with no intention of giving them any religious training; when men have been known to loiter outside some of our Town Churches, ready to stand sponsors for the price of a drink; then we may not be surprised if in some cases the Holy Spirit disowns His own ordinance, or if the results of Baptism are not as apparent as we should expect them to be.

But the abuse is not always an argument for the disuse. We do not need, as some, to disparage Baptism: rather we should desire to encourage, both in ourselves and others, a more spiritual view of that Divine appointment. The Sacraments are effectual means of grace when they are effectually received, and it is our duty to guard lest our faithlessness be a barrier to the Holy Spirit's working, and so to work and pray that, by the operation of the blessed Comforter, each baptized infant may be really and truly consecrated as a temple of the Lord, a habitation of God through the Spirit.

2. From Baptism we pass to *Confirmation*. Here certainly, if anywhere, we shall look for the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Strengthen, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter," "Defend, O Lord . . . . with Thy heavenly grace," is the language of the Prayer Book in Confirmation. It is not simply an occasion when young people of fourteen years or upwards shall confess their willingness to serve Christ and to fight under His banner: it may be, it ought to be, *it is*, the supplement to Baptism, when, through the laying on of hands, young souls are confirmed and strengthened

by the fuller outpouring of the Holy Ghost. "They laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost."[1] Such is the description of Confirmation in the Bible, and now, as then, young people should be taught to believe in that spiritual enabling, and to thank God that He has sealed them, if they yielded themselves to that sealing, with the Holy Spirit of promise.[2]

3. Confirmation is the gate to the *Holy Communion*, and here, too, we shall do well to recognize the work of God the Holy Ghost. In the first Prayer Book of Edward the Sixth, and in the Scotch and American Liturgies, there is a petition which is absent in our own. It is an Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The Priest, in the prayer of Consecration, prays that God may, "with His Holy Spirit and Word, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these His gifts . . . . that they may be unto us the body and blood of His most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ." These words have been removed in our present Liturgy. Many would desire their re-instatement; but, whether they be there or not, the faithful communicant will always remember that the Holy Ghost is the real Consecrator, and that it is only through the Divine operation that the simple elements of bread and wine become to the hungry and thirsty soul the communion of the Saviour's Presence. This, indeed, is what our Lord taught: for after speaking at Capernaum strange mysterious words about the Bread of Life, and the necessity of feeding upon the Son of Man, He warned His hearers against a gross materialism,

[1] Acts viii. 17; xix. 6. [2] Eph. i. 13.

and significantly added, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."[1]

4. We will turn to another important rite of the Church—*Ordination.* Do you remember that farewell meeting on the strand of Miletus, when S. Paul took leave of the elders of Ephesus, and the sadness of parting was embittered by the thought that they should see his face no more? And do you remember how S. Paul addresses those elders? "Take heed," he says, "to yourselves and the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers."[2] Observe the expression, "*The Holy Ghost has made you overseers.*" He speaks of their commission, their ordination, being of Divine appointment, and the true Ordainer was the Holy Ghost.

There is another passage where the same idea occurs. It is Acts xiii. 2 The occasion was the selection of Paul and Barnabas for the missionary work of the Church. Some think this was a regular ordination to the ministry; others that it was rather a commission for the special work of the evangelization of the heathen.[3] But, whichever it be, we may notice that the Holy Spirit is the unseen Agent Who operates throughout. He it is Who says, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul," and when at last they start on

[1] S. John vi. 63. [2] Acts xx. 28.

[3] If this passage describes the *Ordination* of Paul and Barnabas, we are met by the fact that the ordainers were not the Apostles, but the prophets and teachers of Antioch—an argument that tells against the necessity of episcopal ordination. It is, however, thought by some that, as S. Paul generally asserts the directness of his Ordination from God and not from man (*e.g.*, Gal. i. 1), this laying on of hands was of the character of a missionary dismissal.

their perilous enterprise they are described as being "sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

It is in like manner that the Church in her Ordination Service says, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God." I know that some object to this sentence as being *too direct*, and it is certain that during the first twelve centuries the *precatory* form, as now in the Greek Church, was the common usage;[1] but, though we may demur as to our Church's wisdom in perpetuating a form of words which was of later introduction, the idea at least is clear that the power and validity of Ordination is the gift of the Holy Spirit of God. This was the truth that the Risen Lord taught the disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem,[2] and it is a truth which the Church proclaims and perpetuates to-day.

I might show that the Holy Spirit is the Inspirer of other means of grace.

He is the Soul of worship. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit."[3]

He is the Sustainer of prayer. "Praying . . . . with supplication in the Spirit."[4]

He is the Source of all spiritual gifts. "Dividing to every man severally as He will."[5]

But enough has been said to indicate how abundantly the Bible and the Prayer Book present the grand conception of the Church in her worship and work, as a Temple of God, a habitation of God through the Spirit, rising like a vast building, stage by stage.

[1] See *Gore*, The Church and the Ministry. Note C. [2] S. John xx. 22.
[3] Phil. iii. 3. [4] Eph. vi. 18. [5] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

and story by story, her foundation the Rock of Ages, her stones the souls of Christian saints, her aim Heaven.

"Ah," you say, "this is an idea; the reality is very different. The baptism of water does not always seem to convey the baptism of the Spirit; the rite of Confirmation is often but an empty form, and the boys who were confirmed one year are no better the next; ordained ministers, too, have their failings as much as other people." Yes, I know it. In S. Paul's time there were reprobates,[1] and there are reprobates still. But there is no use in dwelling on this darker side of our Church life, nor should we allow ourselves to be disheartened by the instances of human perversity frustrating the grace of God. Our duty is to make the Church of the present better than the Church of the past; our duty is to see that by God's good grace our Church life may more closely correspond with its grand ideal—"a habitation of God through the Spirit." Imagination is not to be despised even in religion, and it is much that we should keep before us continually that noble picture of the text—the Church "a Temple of God, a habitation of God through the Spirit."

What can we do?

1. We can begin with ourselves. We can search our own hearts, or rather ask God to search our hearts that nothing impure may defile those temples of His grace. We can pray to God, we can wait upon God, that He may pour down upon us more abundantly the gifts and graces of His own blessed Spirit.

2. We can try to maintain a more spiritual conception

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

of our corporate Church-life, not trying to disparage or make light of the means of grace, because they are sometimes abused, but rather endeavouring to promote a more reverent and more thoughtful use. God, it is true, "is not tied to the Sacraments;" where the Spirit is, there is *liberty*,[1] and He bloweth where He listeth. But *do not think cheaply of the channels of grace.* Do not think *you* can dispense with them, because other good people have done so. Ask great things of God; expect great things from God. And thus in our worship, in our services, in our work, we shall be "built together," linked by that spiritual union which, after all, is the closest bond of fellowship; thus our little corner of the Catholic Church will become more and more a Communion of Saints; thus the Divine edifice will grow higher and higher, according to the design of its Great Architect, a house not made with hands, a spiritual temple, a habitation of God *through the Spirit.*

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17; S. John iii. 8.

VII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONFIRMATION.

ACTS XIX. 1-7.

"And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

IT was in S. Paul's third missionary journey that he met, on his arrival at Ephesus, a small body of men, who are here called "disciples." The term indicates that they had some elementary knowledge of Christ and Christianity; but that this knowledge was very slight and shallow is shown by the conversation which follows. For when S. Paul enquires whether they received the Holy Ghost—*i.e.*, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit—"when they believed,"[1] they reply that they have not even heard

[1] This is the correct reading—*not* "since they believed:" see R.V. The passage by itself does not indicate an outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to conversion.

of His existence. Such ignorance was appalling. We should be surprised to find it even in the first standard children of our National Schools. But the reason appears in the next verse. These disciples were really disciples of John the Baptist rather than of Jesus. Their Christianity was of an elementary kind, and of the event and teaching of Pentecost they were altogether ignorant. They had received John's baptism, which was the sign and symbol of repentance. They had not received Christian baptism, with its promise and pledge of supernatural power through the outpouring of the Spirit by the risen and ascended Saviour.

S. Paul accordingly shows them that while John's baptism was a good thing, it was but preparatory to incorporation into a nobler family. John himself had pointed to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[1] He had baptized with water; Christ, he had told them, should baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire."[2] If John himself were yet alive he would have urged his disciples to transfer their allegiance to the Saviour. Such was S. Paul's argument, and his hearers are convinced. They are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and afterwards S. Paul lays his hands upon them, and they receive the Holy Ghost.

The incident is full of teaching. It is one of the three[3] passages in the New Testament in which Confirmation is indicated with absolute certainty. It shows us that Baptism and Confirmation were the appointed

[1] S. John i. 29. [2] S. Matt. iii. 11. [3] *Cf.* Acts viii. 17; Heb. vi. 1, 2.

means of entry into the Society of Christ, and it also shews that Confirmation was accompanied, at least on this occasion, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

We should notice and weigh these passages, because they teach us the value the Apostles set upon these rites, and how the Holy Ghost honoured and inspired them by His blessing.

I am afraid that among many to-day there is a tendency to disparage and undervalue the appointed means of grace, just as in other quarters there is a tendency to overvalue them, or rather to concentrate in them the whole of the spiritual life.

The latter has been the error of the Roman Church. The Church of Rome saw that in the Apostolic days certain rites and ceremonies were customary, and that their observance was attended by great blessing; they perceived that God appointed baptism as the entrance to the Church, and that early Christian writers (S. Paul, for instance, in Rom. vi.) looked on it as a real transference into a state of privilege and grace; they saw that Confirmation, the laying on of hands, was connected with a manifest outpouring of the Holy Spirit; they recognized in the Holy Communion a very real and sacred communication of Christ to the souls of believers; they knew that in the orderly ministry of the Church, connected together by a definite line of historical succession lay the continuous manifestation of the Unity of God's Church on earth. But the Church of Rome, beginning in humility, soon passed into arrogance. It originated in wonder that God was graciously pleased to use insignificant means and channels for the bestowal

of His grace; it soon yielded to pride in the social ascendency and power which such a belief fostered. In the words of a thoughtful writer who, after wading through the misty mazes of half-belief, came at last to the knowledge of Christ, and found his home in the Church of England, "Close to her (the Roman Church's) power of social influence, was a passion for social ascendency. Close to her faith that God was the strength of all her actions, was a disposition to dwell on her actions as though they were necessary to God. She was willing to recognize her own dependence, but most unwilling to suppose that He could ever choose any other instrument. It was natural to her to believe that all real power, as essentially orderly, could be organized and codified and reduced to a system; and on this followed the natural temptation to claim for her own acts, as fixed physical occasions of spiritual influences, the right of being their exclusive cause. After proclaiming that a Divine influence attended her ministry, which was in no way due to her own power, she fell into the snare of prizing her instrumentality as if it had been the very centre of that influence."[1]

Now against this system, where human agency or material rites are everywhere the visible media and the *only media* for bringing man into union with God, Protestantism has protested. But often Protestantism has seemed to protest not only against the abuse of the machinery, but against the machinery itself. You cannot read the books of many popular religious writers without seeing that they entirely overlook and

[1] Theological Essays. R. H. Hutton, p. 341. (Macmillan.)

ignore the very considerable part which some ordinances held in the Apostolic times. They uphold "Unsectarian" teaching which commonly has little to say on either Baptism or Confirmation. They would regard such teaching as the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, if it were put into modern language and published for the first time, as unsound and untrue. If they dwell on the Sacraments, they hold that they are not so much means of receiving, but rather the acknowledgment of grace already received. The laws of action and reaction are equal, and the reaction from an exclusive and arrogant Sacramentarian system has with some bodies of Christians led to the omission of the Sacraments altogether.[1] Refusing, and rightly refusing, to believe that the Church has the custody of God, they seem to forget that God may have the custody of His Church.

But all this surely is wrong, false to the teaching not only of the English Church, but false to the teaching of the Word of God. I open my Bible and I read, "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body."[2] I find water and the Holy Spirit connected in more than one place. I find mention of a laver of regeneration,[3] and I refuse to believe that it is a mere metaphor. I turn to the Liturgy, and in the Baptismal Service I find that our Church believes that God's Holy Spirit is present there. I look in the Articles, and I find that Sacraments are not only "badges and tokens of our profession," but rather "certain sure witnesses and

[1] *e.g.*, the Society of Friends, and to some extent the Salvation Army.

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 13. [3] Tit. iii. 5 (R.V. margin).

effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him."[1] And therefore I think that I am bound to believe that if the Sacraments be duly received they are very real and very powerful means of grace, and that any teaching which overlooks them or reduces them to mere forms is contrary to the truth of God.

If the introductory rite of Baptism is thus, according to the Bible, blessed by God, the same may be said of that which is its complement—Confirmation. In the two cases where we have an account of Confirmation, the laying on of hands is accompanied by a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God. It was so at Samaria; it was so at Ephesus.[2] They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. In early days Confirmation followed close upon Baptism. By a wise arrangement we defer the completion of the Baptismal rite until the children have come to thoughtful years; and if we look upon Baptism as awaiting its completion in Confirmation, a great many of the objections which some have urged against Infant Baptism will disappear. It is well for us to remember that the *primary* aspect of Confirmation is the imparting of the gift of the Spirit. What may be the precise relation of the Holy Spirit's work in Baptism to His work in Confirmation it is difficult to determine; but it would seem that in the latter case He floods the soul with strengthening and energizing power, deepening and confirming the work

[1] Art. xxv. [2] Acts viii.; xix.

already begun. In Confirmation we come, not simply to make a public confession of faith, but *to be confirmed*, to be strengthened, to receive the Holy Ghost afresh for the Service to which we consecrate our lives. Many, we know, come simply as a matter of course, because they are old enough, or because their parents wished them to come, without any real desire to seek the aid of the Holy Ghost. For these Confirmation is barren of results; they miss the blessing. O, there is need, much need, to think more of the supernatural side of a familiar rite, and to teach our young people something of the preparation, of the prayerfulness, of the awe, of the expectancy which should accompany what is probably the most important event of their lives. According to our faith it is given to us, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall not be left unsatisfied.

And yet, if God blesses and will bless these means of grace, still we are bound to remember that God is greater than His Church. There is a sovereignty, there is an independence, in the Holy Spirit's working which refuses to be bound by any known laws. In the Bible you will find outpourings of the Holy Spirit *quite independent of and unconnected with any ordinance or rite.* At Pentecost the disciples were simply waiting, and the Spirit came. When the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his friends, they had not received even Baptism.[1] If we need any further illustration we have but to think of that remarkable religious community called the Society of Friends. Who is there will deny the

[1] Acts x. 44-48.

indwelling of the Holy Ghost in men like John Bright, or women like Elizabeth Fry? Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that at one time the Friends did more to bear witness for the supernatural working of the Spirit than any other body of Christian people; and yet the Friends, according to the strange perversity of their system, have dispensed with both the baptism of water and the laying on of hands. Theories must be tested by facts, and such a fact as this may be God's corrective to that narrowness of view, which would place unworthy limits on His grace and bounty.

Let us revert, in conclusion, to the text. "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?"[1] S. Paul is doubtless thinking of the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit, which have long since passed away, and the question can scarcely now be put in the same form. But there may well be searchings of heart whether or not we have definitely sought and cherished the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit, and whether or not at the present time we are listening to His guidance and depending on His help. With most of us Baptism and Confirmation lie in the distant past, and they may not be repeated. "O that I might be confirmed again with my *present* sense of its importance!" said once a man, who though he was confirmed at the proper age was not really converted until long afterwards. The wish, however laudable, was useless. Confirmation comes but once, and it is not our custom to repeat it. But it is never too late to seek again a fresh renewal of the Spirit; it is never too late, and never too soon, to seek a fresh

[1] Acts xix. 2, R.V.

kindling of our faith and hope and love. There is a prayer, which was said on our behalf long ago, but which each can re-echo for himself, and it is this—

"Defend, O Lord, me Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that I may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until I come into Thy everlasting Kingdom. Amen."

VIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

S. JOHN VII. 39.

"The Holy Ghost was not yet *given*."

OUR Lord is speaking of the water of life. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He points to Himself as the Source that can alone satisfy the deepest cravings of our nature. But He does more. He promises that they who drink of this water of life shall in turn become fountains of blessing to others around them. "He that believeth on Me"—these are His words—"as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." At this point, you will notice, S. John interposes an explanatory note. "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*;[1] because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The disciple, in fact, tells us that the realization of the promise was of the future rather than the present, and that the words were not fulfilled until the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost after our Lord's Ascension into Heaven.

[1] The word "given" does not occur in the original.

But here we have a difficulty. Why, you may ask, should we speak of the Holy Spirit as "coming" on that first Whit Sunday? Why should S. John say "the Holy Ghost was not yet given"? Was not the Holy Spirit in the Jewish Church as well as the Christian Church? Do we not read of the operation of the Holy Ghost right down the ages from the time when in days far before all human history, the "Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters,"[1] and was the Author of animal and vegetable life? Do we not read of the Spirit of the Lord coming on Joshua and Jephthah and Samson and Saul, and many another of later days?[2] Did not the heathen confess that the spirit of the holy gods was in Daniel? Was not John the Baptist "filled with the Holy Ghost" from his birth,[3] just as Peter and Paul and Barnabas are also described as "filled with the Holy Ghost"? Why then should we speak of the day of Pentecost as witnessing a new departure? What is the difference, if any, between the operation of the Holy Spirit before and after our Lord's Ascension?

Such questions as these are natural and reasonable, and it is not an easy matter to answer them. But the effort is worth making if thus we gain a fuller view of the privileges of the era in which our lot is cast.

At the outset it may, I think, be said that the same thing may appear both new and old as you contemplate it from two different points of view. Take, for instance, our Lord's own words to the disciples, "A new com-

[1] Gen. i. 2. [2] Num. xxiv. 2; xxvii. 18; Judges xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 6, 19, etc.
[3] S. Luke i. 15; Acts iv. 8; xiii. 9; xi. 24.

mandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."[1] In one sense this commandment was not new; it was "old from the beginning,"[2] inculcated not only by the law of Moses, but by the unwritten law of God implanted at creation within the human heart. But from the time of Christ this commandment acquired a new meaning. It became new in the breadth of its application, new in the depths of its obligation, new in the intensity of the emphasis which it received from the supreme example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus it was not incorrect to speak of this republication of the law of love as something *new*, such as the world had never known or seen before.

In the same way we may say that, in one sense, the outpouring of the Spirit was no new thing. Lawgiver, Psalmist, and Prophet had been inspired of old by the Holy Ghost. Again and again, as in the days of Noah, the Spirit had striven with the wills and affections of mankind. But when we come to consider what happened on Pentecost, we see a manifestation of the Spirit, new not only in the greater intensity and abundance of His working, but *new in the very mode and method of His presentment.*

1. The first difference to be noticed between the period before and after Pentecost is this—that whereas in former times He worked mainly upon isolated beings, "raising up heroic witnesses to His power amidst the great mass of unsanctified humanity," He now works on the world through the medium of a compact and united body of men, whom we call the Church. S. Paul,

[1] S. John xiii. 34. [2] 1 John ii. 7.

you will have noticed, broadly addresses his readers as those who belong to a great Society, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit.[1] "Know ye not," he writes, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[2] And again, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own?"[3] In the former passage he speaks of the Church collectively, and in the latter of the members individually as being a temple of God. This idea is further developed in another place, where he speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ, into which they have been baptized by one Spirit, and through which the Spirit severally distributes His graces and gifts. He does not, you will observe, here[4] distinguish between true believers and false, between a visible and an invisible Church; he addresses them as a whole; he even gives them credit for what some of them do not possess; he speaks of them broadly as men translated from the kingdom of darkness, and brought by the very terms of their incorporation into the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, with its spiritual privileges and blessings, its spiritual duties and obligations—"Ye are," he writes, "the temple of God."

Now this is language that can scarcely be found in connection with the Holy Spirit's work before the Incarnation. We read, it must be admitted, in the Old Testament of men so God-possessed that their devotion and holiness were scarcely inferior to the best

[1] Eph. ii. 22. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 16. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

[4] It must, however, be remembered that elsewhere S. Paul reminds his readers that *all* the members of the Church have not the Spirit.—Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. ii. 14, etc.

examples of Christian times; but these instances are more or less rare. The work of the Spirit was sporadic, rather than generic. It was reserved for the Christian Church to present the idea of a *permanent, continuous* Society, enlisted under the banner of Christ, and permeated by His Spirit, a temple of God, wherein He was pleased to dwell, a house of Apostolic building, rising stage by stage and story by story, its foundation the Rock of Ages, its stones living souls built together by the Spirit into a habitation of God.

My brethren, into this Society, into this Fellowship, we have been admitted. We have been baptized by the Spirit into this one body; we are entitled to claim its privileges and to share its blessings. O that the thought of the magnificence of our birthright might stir us to be worthier members of that society! O that the words, "Ye are the temple of God," might be applied not only ideally to the whole, but actually and truly to every soul among us!

2. Another difference between the Holy Spirit's action in the Old and New Testament is this—that our Saviour implied that after His Ascension the Holy Spirit would be a more *intimate*, a more *internal* Guest than He had been before. "He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you."[1] We cannot, of course, maintain that the Holy Spirit did not dwell at an earlier period in the hearts of men; for when S. John Baptist is said to have been "filled with the Holy Ghost," we must attribute this fulness to a personal indwelling. But generally and broadly speaking, if you will read what is

[1] S. John xiv. 17.

said of the Spirit in the Old Testament,[1] you will notice that the operation of the Holy Spirit under the older dispensation is regarded as something *external*, something "like a breath of God coming upon souls in sweeping and stormy gusts,"[2] rather than in *internal* possession, quiet and settled, felt sometimes more and sometimes less, yet always there and always to be relied on. It was, if we may use a very modern illustration, more like the breeze impelling the sailing boat from without, than like the steam, hid *within* the depths of the steamer. The one is external, fitful, inconstant; the other is internal, regular, and always at hand for use. It is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit, this abiding, constant power *within* the Church, which is one of the peculiar privileges belonging to the children of the Kingdom of Christ, and which marks the later from the earlier dispensation.

3. A third point of difference, however, more noticeable than the other two, seems to be the peculiar character of the Holy Spirit's mission after Pentecost. When our Lord, in the well-known chapters of S. John's Gospel, speaks to the disciples of the second Comforter, He mentions, among other details, that His peculiar work should be to "testify" of Christ, to "glorify" Christ, to bring Christ's words to their remembrance, to present Christ's work to their understanding.[3]

Now this is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit

[1] *e.g.*, Judges vi. 34; 1 Sam. x. 10; Ezek. xi. 5.
[2] Mason. "Faith of the Gospel," p. 211.
[3] S. John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 14, 15.

after Pentecost. To the Christian Church He reveals God, our Saviour, in a way that to the Jewish Church was impossible. It is true that according to S. Peter[1] the "Spirit of Christ" testified to the prophets long centuries before the Christian era of the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow; but the testimony of a Jewish prophet and the testimony of a Christian saint are two different things. If in the Psalms, if in Isaiah, if in Zechariah, if in many other books, we find allusions to a Saviour King Who should redeem the world by the offering of Himself, it must be admitted that such prophecies are sometimes fragmentary and obscure, and sometimes so surrounded by contemporary allusions that the precise meaning is often doubtful. How far the writers understood their own utterances, how far they were but unconscious instruments in the hands of an overmastering power, must always be a question of some uncertainty. But this, at least, we know, that on the first Whit Sunday the Holy Spirit came to glorify, to testify of Christ, as He had never before. A flood of light was shed on events and sayings as yet but dimly comprehended; an intensity, a reality, an activity was imparted to their faith which was an experience altogether new in the history of the disciples' lives.

It is thus that these later days are sometimes called the Dispensation of the Spirit. The privilege is great to such as use it worthily. John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost;" he could point to Christ as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin

[1] 1 Peter i. 11.

of the world;" the Holy Ghost was manifested to him at the Baptism of our Saviour, in visible shape; and yet even he, we are told, was less privileged than the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.[1] And why? Because *his* knowledge of Christ and His salvation was inferior to that of those who live in the full knowledge of Gethsemane, Calvary, and Olivet; because the Holy Ghost could not reveal to him the blessings of redemption as they are revealed to those who have listened to the Story of the Cross.

Thus we seem to see the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost in a new character, as the Spirit of Christ, the *Revealer of Redemption.* Taught by that Divine Teacher, words such as forgiveness and reconciliation are not vague symbols, but words of power and words of life. Taught by the Holy Ghost, the Gospels are not simply a sweet Galilean pastoral; they are the manifestation of the Incarnate Son of God. Christian baptism is more than John's baptism, the baptism of repentance and amendment; it is incorporation into a redeemed and ransomed race. The Christian Eucharist is more than the Paschal feast: it is the communion and indwelling of our Unseen Lord. The Holy Spirit has greater blessings for the humblest believer in the Kingdom of Christ than He gave to the greatest saints in the olden days.

These, brethren, are some of the features of that dispensation in which we live.

The Holy Spirit has come to the Church as He never came before.

[1] S. Matt. xi. 11.

He has come to animate and unite a great Society.

He has come as an abiding and internal Guest.

He has come to implant in us, to glorify in us, the Incarnate and Glorified Son of Man.

O that we might prize more highly the transcendent privileges of our position! O that we might walk more worthily of our calling! Great blessings entail great obligations; for of those to whom "much is given" will "much be required."

IX.

UNITY AMID DIVERSITY.

2 KINGS II. 18.
"The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha."

1 COR. XII. 4.
"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

WHEN Elijah was about to be taken up to Heaven, Elisha prayed that a "double" portion of his spirit might rest upon him. This cannot mean that Elisha was to be twice as great as Elijah; for, if it were so, the prayer was certainly not fulfilled. A "double" portion means here a portion double the amount bequeathed to others—an elder brother's portion.[1] Elisha asked, not that he might surpass his master, but that he might succeed him. The prayer was granted, and as the sons of the prophets saw Elisha step through the parted waters they recognized him as Elijah's successor. "The spirit of Elijah," they said, "doth rest upon Elisha."

The lesson of the story is *the succession of spiritual grace* in the Church of God. It is repeated every day. Wherever you place a man of fervid enthusiasm, spiritual endowment, and transcendent power, his enthusiasm, his power become to some extent contagious. He attracts others to him. He communicates to them

[1] See Deut. xxi. 17.

some of the qualities which have made him what he is. Consciously or unconsciously they imbibe his influence: and even when his presence is no longer seen, and his voice no longer heard among them, his spirit lives on, and will live on, in those who have known the magic spell of his companionship. The succession of spiritual gifts is a great fact, so patent, so familiar, that it is unnecessary to dwell on this point. Had it been otherwise, all great movements in the Church would have expired with their founders.

But the point on which we will enlarge to-day is that in this case, and indeed in many cases, this succession is a succession not of *likeness*, but of *contrast;* that a man may catch the spirit of another, and yet be very far from being a mere copy of the other; that there can be One Spirit permeating great diversity of expression; that there can be much unity of aim underlying much variety of action.

We are apt, I think, to imagine Elisha to have been a mere reproduction of Elijah; not so great, perhaps, nor so terrible, but still a copy. The names are alike, and we fancy that the characters were alike also. On the contrary, Dean Stanley[1] has shown that they were in many points as *un*like as possible, and a study of the history reveals the difference. Elijah lives a solitary life, dwelling apart in the rocky fastnesses of the wilderness; Elisha dwells in his own house within the royal city,[2] or lingers in the colleges of the prophets, or is a welcome guest in a quiet family at Esdraelon.[3] Elijah,

[1] Lectures on Jewish Church (Murray), vol. ii., p. 274-5.

[2] 2 Kings v. 9, 24; vi. 22. [3] 2 Kings iv. 8, 10.

like John the Baptist, is rude and strange in his attire, stern and severe in his denunciation of wickedness in high places, the terror of angry kings and princes; Elisha came like the Son of Man, "eating and drinking," and was the friend and counsellor of kings. One was crowned at his bidding; another consulted him in war; another in the treatment of his prisoners; another in the extremity of illness; another waited on him to receive his dying counsels.[1] The miracles of Elijah were mainly deeds of wild terror; the miracles of Elisha, with a few exceptions, were works of beneficence and mercy. He lives, for the most part, a quiet and peaceable life, and "when the end comes he is not rapt away, like Elijah, in a rushing whirlwind and chariot of fire, but he is buried and honoured, so Josephus[2] tells us, with a splendid funeral in the royal city of Samaria."

The contrast between the fiery mission preacher and his gentler disciple is marked throughout. But yet the sons of the prophets were not wrong when they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha." Elisha, though dissimilar, had received much from Elijah. The same spirit, the same inspiration, passed from the greater to the lesser; for succession of grace does not imply that each is to be the copy of his predecessor. The Spirit does not come to crush our individuality, but to animate our natural characteristics and to raise them to a higher level.

This thought of unity amid diversity of manifestation brings us to the second text.

[1] 2 Kings ix. 1, 2, 6-10; iii. 11-19; vi. 21; viii. 8; xiii. 14-19.

[2] Josephus Ant. ix. 8, § 6.

In the Corinthian Church a certain amount of jealousy and contempt had arisen among the possessors of different spiritual gifts and graces. Some magnified their own gifts, and depreciated the gifts of their neighbours. Others, because their own peculiar endowments were less showy and less impressive, were inclined to envy and despondency. How does S. Paul argue with them? He tells them that all bodily, all mental, all spiritual gifts come from one and the self-same Source. There are diversities of gifts, and differences of administration, and differences of operation, but the same Spirit. A talent need not be less Divine because it is less showy: on the contrary, the homeliest gifts may be the most useful, and the Church of Christ, he tells them, is not to be a "battle-ground of a jealous individualism, but the home of an unselfish brotherhood."

We see, then, that the second text emphasizes the first; that the Spirit may be the same, though the medium through which it passes may be different. There is variety in the kingdom of nature; we must expect variety in the Kingdom of Grace.

"One and the same rain," says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, "comes down upon all the world, yet it becomes white in the lily, and red in the rose, and purple in the violets and pansies, and different and various in all the several kinds; it is one thing in the palm tree, and another in the vine, and all in all things. In itself, indeed, it is uniform, and changes not, but by adapting itself to the nature of each thing that receives it, it becomes what is appropriate to each. Thus also the Holy Ghost,

one and uniform and undivided in Himself, distributes His grace to every man as He wills."[1]

The history of our religion shews how largely this unity amid diversity exists.

Take, for instance, the Bible. Is anything more remarkable than the diversity and the variety that distinguish its several parts? What is the Bible? Not a treatise of a single author, but a collection of books which has been the growth of centuries, by different men in different countries at different times—men who preserved their own individuality and their own methods of expression. Can any two writings be more unlike than the Book of Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans? Can there be greater diversity of style than the commonsense morality of the Proverbs and the mystical allegories of the Revelation? And yet there is a plan underlying the Bible, so that these books, so diverse both in style and contents, form a compact and united whole; throughout the various component parts there is a unity, such as is found in no similar collection of writings. It is the unity of the One Spirit, breathing in different tones through Psalmist, Priest, and Prophet, and teaching by many voices the wondrous harmony of revelation.

Or, take the characters of the Apostles. No two men, I imagine, were more diverse than S. Paul and S. John. S. John is gentle, contemplative, a man whom to know is to love. S. Paul is fiery, argumentative, passionate, a man of strong logic and indomitable will. And yet both are equally devoted

[1] Cyril, *Catech.* xvi. 12. See *Lux Mundi*, p. 323.

to One Lord; both members have hold of the Head by a vital and intimate union, though they discharge different functions; both have been baptized by the same Spirit.

It must be so. A living Church is not a stereotyped uniformity. "The body," says S. Paul, "is not one, but many."[1] The hand has its use; the foot has its use. The hand cannot say to the foot, nor the eye to the ear, "I have no need of thee." Each is necessary to the others, and all are necessary to the Head. But throughout the body, if the body properly discharges its functions, there will be the unity of a living consciousness which animates the several parts, and makes each perform its office for the welfare of the whole.[2]

Let us gather from these texts two practical lessons.

1. First, a *lesson of Charity*. What is often the bitterness, the suspiciousness, the rancour of religious controversy, but a want of recognition of the possibility of unity amid diversity? We are all apt to think too cheaply of those who differ from us. The older men look wistfully at the young Elishas of their time, and say, because they miss the old phrases, that the spirit of Elijah is dead. The ardent impulsive missioner is apt to depreciate the dull plodding work of his stationary brother. The quiet, humble man of God is wont to regard the reformer as a dangerous firebrand.

It should not be so. Elijah has his use, and so has Elisha, and the Church needs both. In the park of Philadelphia there stands the monument of Washington, composed of stones taken from the different States of

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 14. [2] Eph. iv. 16; *cf.* Goulburn, *Personal Religion*, pp. 346-350.

the Commonwealth which he founded. Different in colour, in shape, and in quality, brought from widely distant parts of America, they are welded together into unity, and on them stands the statue of the common founder. Thus each devout soul, each loyal community, each earnest religious movement, may contribute the part of truth specially entrusted to its care, forming together that growing edifice which is to sustain God's effigy, the likeness of Himself, the living presentment of Christ before the world.[1]

2. We may also learn a lesson of *Consolation.*

Very often do we distress ourselves as we compare our lesser gifts with the larger endowment of others. "O that I had the ability, the eloquence, the opportunities of this one or of that!" Such regrets are useless. Elijah was unique. Elisha does not work in the same way, nor wear the same dress, but there was the same Spirit. In nature's laboratory the gentle dew is as necessary as the whirlwind. You may not have brilliancy of position, or commanding intellect; you may not be able to follow some of whom you have read in their magnificent acts of heroism; but assuredly God has His use for you, and if you do your quiet work faithfully God does not ask for more. Be *yourself*, and do not try to be simply a copy of others. Only let us see that the same Spirit which animated them is guiding and directing us; only let us try to be equally loyal to our common Lord. For this purpose it is well to frequent the company of the good, to read the lives

[1] The illustration is adapted from a sermon by Canon Basil Wilberforce in the *Christian Commonwealth.*

of the Saints, to listen to the echoes of their voices, to catch the infection of their zeal; while we remember always that though the Holy Spirit is infallibly promised to those who seek His aid, He divides and distributes His gifts to each man severally according to His will.

X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE REVEALER OF CHRIST.

S. JOHN XV. 26.
"He shall testify of Me."

S. JOHN XVI. 14.
"He shall glorify Me."

A HEATHEN native of India, it is said, was much perplexed by a series of teachers who had aimed at his conversion, and he described his experience in some such words as these—

First, he said, came the Mohammedan missionary, and he told him that there was but *One* God, Whose name was Allah. Then, some missionaries who called themselves Protestants, and they seemed to speak of *two* Gods, a Father-God and a Son-God. Lastly, there came some missionaries called Catholics, and they seemed to worship *three* Gods, the Father and the Son, and another who was named the Virgin Mary.

This may sound like a caricature, and probably the poor Hindoo's account is not a very accurate representation; but at least it gives the impression left upon his mind. And the point which I want to notice is this, that he, like the Ephesian disciples in Acts xix., had not so much as heard whether there be any

Holy Ghost. In the second case the Holy Spirit was omitted; in the last case He was supplanted by one, who, if she may claim our most loving admiration, is never for a moment entitled to be associated with the Father and the Son as an object of *adoration*.

When we come nearer home, we notice often a similar neglect of the Holy Spirit's work in both Protestant and so-called Catholic teaching. Of course, both Protestants and Romanists, for the most part, hold orthodox views on the Person of the blessed Comforter; but often in their literature and in their devotions the allusions to the Holy Ghost are rare and scanty. The sermon of to-day, it is said, must be practical, and congregations are impatient of doctrine. On Whit Sunday, no doubt, the clergyman should speak about the Holy Spirit; but the subject is not generally interesting, and addresses on the Christian virtues or our social duties are "so much more practical." Such thoughts are often felt, if not expressed. But the Christian teacher, if he value his office, will feel that to place the Holy Spirit in the background is to be false to the proportion of faith, and false to the best interests of his hearers. He will remember those remarkable words, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,"[1] or "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His,"[2] and remembering them he will be careful, not only on Whit Sunday, but at regular intervals throughout the year, to point to that Unseen Agent, equal in the unity of the Godhead with the Father and

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [2] Rom. viii. 9.

the Son, without Whose aid there can be no spiritual life and no spiritual power.

We will dwell to-day on one aspect of the Holy Spirit's work suggested by the texts. We will think of Him as *the Revealer of Christ.*

One of the errors of popular theology in the present day is what may be called a kind of unconscious *Tritheism.* We speak sometimes as if there were three Gods, each with His separate functions, and each with His special attributes.[1] Thus it is not uncommon to refer all the justice to the Divine Father, and all the mercy to the Divine Son. But we must never forget that the three Persons of the Holy Trinity are not three Gods, but One God, and that these three Persons do not act independently, but in entire harmony and union. Though we refer special works, such as Creation, Redemption, Sanctification to different Persons of the Trinity, it will be found that *in none of these do They act alone or apart from the others.*[2] And this harmony of purpose may be seen also in the revelation of the Godhead which God has been pleased to make to mankind. In fact, as the Son united with the Father is the Revelation of the Father to the world, so also the Holy Ghost, equal with the Father and the Son, and proceeding from Both, is the Revealer of Jesus Christ, and the Revealer of the Father through Him.

[1] To a certain extent this is inevitable, as in a Treatise of this kind, where our thoughts are mainly directed to One Person of the Holy Trinity. In public teaching the danger of "dividing the substance" can best be met by dwelling in due proportion on the fundamental truth of the Unity in Trinity.

[2] On the unity in Creation, see Heb. i. 2; Gen. i. 2. Redemption, S. John iii. 16; Heb. ix. 14. Sanctification, S. John xiv. 23.

Let me make this clearer by pointing you to some texts from the Gospel of S. John.

1. One of the most prominent aspects of our Lord's mission, according to S. John, is *to reveal the Father.* Let us especially notice what is said in the Seventeenth chapter.

'I have manifested Thy Name unto the world. . . . Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee" (vv. 6-8).

"I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (v. 26).

Here we see the primary object of our Lord's Mission—to *testify* of the Father, to interpret God to man, to publish a Father's love and a Father's welcome. No man hath seen God at any time. Man had seen His footprints on the sands of history, he had heard His voice in the secret whispers within; but God Himself was hidden. It was to reveal God that Christ came. He came to testify of God, to tell how good, how gracious, how loving, how merciful, was the Eternal and Almighty. He made the revelation we most needed, and the revelation we could best understand, "He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father."[1]

Now parallel to this testimony of our Lord to the Father is the testimony of the Spirit to the Son. Just as Christ came to reveal the Father, so the Holy Spirit

[1] S. John xiv. 9.

was given to reveal the Christ. This parallel may be further traced in connection with the second text.

2. Turn again to S. John, the Seventeenth chapter. Here you will find that the Saviour comes not only to testify of the Father, but to *glorify* the Father.

"I have glorified Thee on earth" (v. 4).

"The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they be one, even as We are one" (v. 22).

Such thoughts are frequent in S. John's Gospel. The Son honours the Father, seeks not His own glory, but His Father's.[1] The Son is glorified in the Father, and the Father is glorified in the Son.[2] He honours, He glorifies the Father, in the perfect fulfilment of His will, in entire dependence upon His guidance, in manifesting the wealth of His love.

We can now trace the *second* parallel—"I have glorified Thee," "He shall glorify Me." What the Son does for the Father, the Spirit does for the Son. In Christ we have the unveiling of the Father's glory, but the glorification of Christ in the hearts of mankind is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus He is called the "Spirit of Christ,"[3] and the "Spirit of the Son,"[4] not only because He proceeds from Christ, but because His work is to testify and to glorify Christ in the hearts of believers.

Let us dwell awhile on this thought. Christ is the revelation of God. In that life of perfect deeds, and in that all-sufficient offering unto death, we have God's last manifestation of His love. Christ is to the Christian "the depository of the whole property of

[1] S. John viii. 49. [2] S. John xiii. 31. [3] Rom. viii. 9. [4] Gal. iv. 6.

God for the Church."[1] In Him all fulness dwells. Whatever we want is there. Every spiritual gift—knowledge, blessing, privilege—comes through Christ, and if we are to enjoy them, we must come to Christ and receive them of Christ.

But then, though all these blessings are stored in Christ, we do not seek them, appreciate them, understand them, until the Blessed Spirit reveals them to our mind in all their attractiveness and beauty.[2] You go into an empty Church at night. On one of the windows is a stained-glass picture of the Crucifixion; but there is no light, and you see nothing but the leaden mouldings of the frame. The picture is there; the glass is there; but the want of light makes it an incomprehensible enigma. At last, in the early morn, the sun rises, the light streams through the coloured panes, and the picture stands before you a thing of beauty, a revelation of love. So it is with the living picture of the love of God which Christ presents to the world. Thousands have little apprehension of Christ. They read the Story of the Cross, but it is a meaningless tale. Christ for them has died in vain. How is it? How is it that they do not see His beauty or feel His power? Because the Spirit has not shewn Christ to them, and until He does they can no more perceive Him as their Saviour and their Friend than you can perceive colour and form in the dark. Only let the Holy Spirit stream through that portraiture of God, and what was dull and meaningless before becomes real and vivid to the soul.

[1] Rev. J. Vaughan. [2] See S. John xvi. 15.

It is this that mainly accounts for the great change and growth in the Apostles' characters after Pentecost. During our Lord's earthly ministry they frequently misunderstood Him, thwarted His purposes, and doubted His power. With opportunities of intimacy, which we would covet, they fell very far short of entering into the beauty of His character or the grandeur of His Person. What then was it that changed these timid, halting disciples into the fearless uncompromising missionaries and martyrs which they afterwards became? Some would say "the Resurrection," but I am inclined to think that undue stress is sometimes laid upon the effect of the Resurrection alone. The evidence for the Resurrection was as strong the day before Pentecost as the day after. *It was the descent of the Holy Spirit that made the difference* and brought three thousand to the Church. The change in the disciples is best accounted for by that quickening of faith and that development of spiritual perception, of which the Holy Spirit was the agent. The Spirit came to testify of Christ, and they in turn bore their testimony to the Saviour. The Spirit glorified Christ to them and in them, and through them Christ was glorified before the world. Without this gift, their faith in our Lord's Resurrection might have drooped after His Ascension, just as the faith in His resurrecting power, as shown in Lazarus, had been no proof against despair at the time of the Crucifixion. It was the Spirit that bare witness, that braced their sluggish wills and made Christ a constant and living reality, that took of the mind of Jesus, and made it their own.

So it has been in every successive development of spiritual experience. Why is it that spiritual discernment is not always the property of the cultured and intellectual? Why is it that we often find greater intimacy with Christ among those who have very few natural qualifications? The answer is that they have accepted the Holy Spirit as their Teacher, and spiritual things are spiritually discerned.[1] Not to the wise and not to the prudent, but to those who with child-like faith yield themselves to the Spirit's teaching, does God reveal His secrets.

But observe further—when the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ and glorifies Christ *two* things are needed. One that Christ should be revealed, illuminated to the heart; the other that the heart should be made receptive of that illumination.

Let us refer again to the illustration of the stained window. We saw that light was necessary for perception. But something more than light is needed. A blind man may stand in full daylight before that window, but the image falls unnoticed on his sightless eyeballs, and until his blindness be removed he sees nothing. It is the Holy Spirit's work to make the heart capable of spiritual perception. "Up in heaven He wafts down to earth a thing of glory; here on earth He prepares the receptacle of faith."[2] He opens the eyes of the blind. He assists the memory, and makes it retentive of holy things. He is called the "Spirit of Faith,"[3] because He not only reveals the faith, but gives the capacity to believe. "He kindles in the penitent

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 7-14. [2] Rev. J. Vaughan. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 13.

soul a love which understands the infinite love of Calvary. He knows not only the lesson, but the learner. He fits the subject to the heart, and the heart to the subject." The most efficient teacher is he who can not only impart information, but he who can create the appetite for knowledge—and such is the Holy Ghost.

My brethren, are there some among us who complain that their grasp of spiritual truth is indistinct and misty? who read their Bibles, but the words are lifeless as stones in the desert? who pray to God, but the heaven seems as brass above them? What is the cause? Have you recognized, have you honoured the Holy Ghost? You say that your Church and its services give you no help—Have you sought the help of the Holy Ghost? People often complain of a lack of power in the sermon—it was dull, it was feeble, it was unimpressive. No doubt there is too often good reason for the complaint; but sometimes it is just possible that the lack of power may be in the hearers. The best of seeds may prove fruitless if they fall on an unprepared soil. Honour the Holy Ghost; ask Him to cleanse your hearts and prepare them for the blessings of His grace. Christ honoured the Holy Ghost,[1] and we must honour Him too.

Let us pray, then, for a larger measure of the gift of God. Now, as in the days of the Apostles, He is given in answer to earnest prayer; now, as of old, He is able to reveal God to the seeking soul.

[1] S. John xvi. 7, "It is expedient," etc.

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire,"

is a short prayer; but those who use it frequently and fervently will find that words cannot declare the measure of its worth.

XI.

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT.

EPH. IV. 30.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

THERE are few sayings more frequently untrue than the common observation, "He is no one's enemy but his own." You happen to know someone who is wasting his time, missing his opportunities, and indulging, it may be, in sins which are fatal to his welfare; and lenient critics shake their heads and say, "Yes, he is a foolish fellow to go on as he does, but he is far too good-natured, far too generous, to hurt anybody; in fact, *he is no one's enemy but his own.*" It is admitted, you will observe, that the man is doing himself harm; but the harm, according to their verdict, is confined to *himself.*

And yet, in nine cases out of ten, this is simply untrue. Our social links are so many, and our personal habits are so contagious, that very few sin against themselves alone. Probably the man of whom we are speaking, if he does not actually lead others astray, is helping to augment that debased standard of public opinion which makes virtue so difficult and vice so easy; certainly he is losing his opportunities of doing good, and to defraud others of our encouragement and help is in itself a sin.

It may be also that his conduct is causing pain and sorrow to some mother or some friend who cares for him even more than he cares for himself. Even our most selfish sins have a social bearing, and very few can say, "It matters not to others what I do or how I live."

But, above and beyond any pain we may consciously or unconsciously inflict on others by foolish indulgence or reckless waste, there is One, we are told, Who is not an unconcerned Spectator of our lives, and a true estimate of the sinfulness of sin will think not only of the harm it brings to the sinner, nor of the shame and sorrow we create for others, but of the pain it gives to the loving Heart of God. "Against Thee only have I sinned,"[1] said David, when it might have appeared that he had not only sinned against his own prospects, but brought ruin upon another's home. And yet, though he can scarcely have forgotten this, it seemed to him that there was an aspect of his sin, so awful, so overwhelming, that it dwarfed all other thoughts into insignificance, and this was the aspect of sin, as sin against an all-holy and all-knowing God. We shall do well to copy him in this estimate of sin. God, let us always remember, is the witness of every act, the hearer of every spoken word, the observer of every unuttered thought; and every sin, however selfish or however social, becomes darker and more terrible when it is viewed as *sin against God*.

The text speaks of the grief of the Holy Spirit. It bids us think of the sorrow and pain which we can

[1] Ps. li. 4.

cause to that unseen Friend, Who is closer to us than we sometimes like to think. We can resist the Holy Spirit;[1] we can quench the Holy Spirit;[2] we can grieve the Holy Spirit; and it is of this grief I wish to speak to-day.

Perhaps it may help us to recognize some of the ways wherein the Holy Spirit may be grieved, if we will consider how He is pleased to work.

1. He acts through the *Conscience*. When S. Paul speaks of his "conscience bearing witness in the Holy Ghost,"[3] he plainly shows that the still small voice within which directs and reproves us may be a whisper from the Holy Spirit of God.

That conscience and the Holy Spirit are not identical is shown by the fact that S. Paul describes himself, at one period of his life, as conscientious according to the prevalent opinions of his time, yet without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.[4] But when the light of the Eternal flashed upon his soul, and Jesus was revealed in him as his Saviour and his Lord, there came an entire revolution in his views, and his conscience seemed to receive a new direction. And indeed, however conscientious we may be in the fulfilment of our duties apart from religious motives, it is certain that a soul who yields to the grace of God and the guidance of the Comforter, gains a much clearer view of the beauty of holiness and the seriousness of sin.

My brethren, honour and respect your conscience; seek the Holy Ghost to illuminate it. Believe that it may be to you the mouthpiece of God. But remember

[1] Acts vii. 51. [2] 1 Thess. v. 19. [3] Rom. ix. 1. [4] Acts xxvi. 9.

this—that if you neglect that secret whisper, which checks you in the beginnings of sin, which warns you of the consequences of sin; if you steel yourself against those feelings of shame for sin committed which should bring you in penitence and sorrow to the feet of the Crucified, you are *grieving the Holy Spirit of God.* To go heedlessly into sin in spite of the entreaties of friends, to persevere in sin when wiser men have plainly told us the consequence—this is sad enough. But it is a sadder and more serious thing to turn a deaf ear to the Voice of God Himself.

2. Again, the Holy Spirit works upon the *Mind.* This is an age eager for knowledge, and never before were there such opportunites of gratifying our thirst for information. But there is a knowledge which transcends all other, because the facts it communicates are the most important with which the mind can possibly be exercised, and this is the knowledge of God. We believe that God has been pleased to make Himself known to His children—not all at once, but gradually and increasingly through long periods of time.[1] Prophets and teachers were divinely sent to declare His character and His will. Their revelation was but fragmentary; they were but harbingers of the dawn. At last the Messiah came, the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person.[2] He came to shew us the Father, as only He could reveal Him,[3] and as we gaze on that wondrous revelation of Divine love and power, as the beauty and the Majesty of Him Who is the Light of the world

[1] Heb. i. 1. [2] Heb. i. 3. [3] S. John i. 18.

streams in upon our souls, we are able to say that we have received "the light of the knowledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."[1]

But this knowledge of God, and of His character and will, comes to us through a Book, and of this Book the Holy Ghost is the inspiring Mind. Holy men, we are told, spake of old "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[2] Psalmist and Prophet, Evangelist and Apostle, all in varying degrees were subject to that unseen influence, not ceasing to be themselves, not mere tools mechanically employed, but living agents empowered to teach those supernatural truths which no human wisdom can discover. The Bible is mainly valuable because it presents to us the knowledge of God, and the Bible is the channel of the Holy Ghost. The man, therefore, who neglects the Bible, who rejects and scorns its truths, not merely robs himself of what might be his comfort and guide, but *grieves the Holy Spirit of God.*

And yet, this is not unfrequently the case. There are those to-day who regard religious education for the young as a matter of indifference, which may safely be set aside for other branches of more important knowledge; and, if the truth be told, in many so-called Christian households, the Bible seems to stand a poor chance beside the novel and the newspaper.

But it is not the mere reading of the Scriptures that conveys the knowledge of God. Much depends upon the spirit in which we read it. When will Christian people remember that spiritual things are spiritually discerned? To scan a chapter simply as a matter of

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [2] 2 Pet. i. 21.

duty or habit, to read it without prayer, without desire to learn, without dependence on the Spirit, what is this but to grieve the Holy Ghost Who offers us the help of His instruction, and Whose mind penetrating our minds can alone impart that knowledge wherein is eternal life?

3. Once more, the Holy Spirit acts upon the *Will.*

Probably with most of us the main difficulty is, not the knowing what is right, but the doing. With the best intentions, the will is weak and helpless. Have we not again and again felt that we *ought* to be holier and better, we *ought* to use more regularly the means of grace, we *ought* to make a braver stand against evil? But it is all so hard, and when the onslaught of temptation comes, all our good resolutions seem to vanish like the morning dew.

But need it be so difficult? Are we quite alone in our struggles? Has not God promised the aid of His Spirit to help and comfort us when heart and flesh are failing? Has He not chosen the weak things of this world—weak in themselves, but strong in the Lord—to be His witnesses and soldiers? Are there not invisible sources of strength, if we will only seek them, which may be to us a very present help in trouble?

But when we think we can do without God, when we reject His aid, and go into the battle with no shield or spear but our own poor resolves, so easily battered and broken; when we try to work out our own salvation, forgetting Him Whose will should invigorate our own—then it must be said that we are *grieving the Holy Spirit of God.*

"Grieve not the Spirit." In one of his sermons[1] Dean Stanley recalls a well-known German picture representing a young man playing at chess with the Tempter of his soul. There he sits, intent upon the game; he sees only the moves of the pieces immediately before him; he thinks he will still win the game. Opposite to him sits the Fiend, exulting over an easy prey. Already piece after piece has been taken; here a good deed gone, there a prayer removed; a few more successful moves on the Tempter's part, and the game is won—and the soul is lost.

But there is yet another figure in the picture, which gives to the scene at once a deeper pathos and also a ray of hope. Behind the young man, unseen by him, unnoticed by the Tempter, stands the Guardian Angel of his soul. The wings are already spread for flight: the face is already turning away. "It is a face not of anger, not of disappointment, not of despair, not of resistance, but of profound compassion and grief."

The picture is an allegory; it seems to remind us of the grief of the Holy Spirit of God.

There is a young man—you know him, for he is to be found in every grade of society—he is the son of perhaps godly parents, was baptized and confirmed. Watch him sitting with the companions of his shame, speaking loose, filthy words, as the "vitriol madness" flushes up in his fevered brain. There he is, sinking deeper and deeper in the slough of sin. A few more moves, and all is lost, and the Devil has his prey. Oh, the pity of it all! But the sorrow that we feel as we

[1] Oxford Lenten Sermons, 1863.

watch the scene is as nothing compared with the sorrow of that Divine Helper, Who grieves over the wreck of that soul unnoticed and unknown.

Or here is another—a lady who in her girlish days was foremost in good works, taught the young, visited the sick, brought light and comfort to many a home. But now she is middle-aged, and she is further off from Heaven than when she was a girl. Somehow the world has laid its chilly hand upon her; she is playing a losing game. Her enthusiasm is lost; her interest is lost; her faith, her hope, are almost gone. She is sad in her more thoughtful moments—how could she be otherwise? She feels that her life is a mistake, her religion a delusion. She is sad; but her sadness is but a shadow of the sadness of the Spirit and the Mind of God, as He grieves over the thought of what might have been, and how a character so generous, so winning, so full of promise, has become so useless, so unprofitable, like a plant blighted and drooping with decay.

My brothers, my sisters, beware how you grieve the Spirit of God. The full text, I know, is not without comfort and hope. It speaks of a "sealing by the Holy Ghost unto the day of redemption," and devout souls have ventured to believe that God will not allow His own to fall away utterly. And indeed there is much in the Bible to inspire such a confidence as this. We like to think that our little lives are in the keeping of a loving Father, Who will not suffer us to be tempted beyond our power of resistance; we are encouraged by the thought that the Good Shepherd seeks His erring sheep "until He find it"; we rejoice to know that the

"love of the Spirit," unlike the friendships of earth so liable to chill and change, is enduring and untiring. All this we may believe; and who is there that would rudely shatter such a confidence, where it is devoutly and humbly entertained? But still we dare not disregard the warning of the text. Seals ere now have been broken, and names have been blotted out of the Book of Life, and the Spirit of the Lord has departed from the heart that was His home.[1] Therefore, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

[1] Rev. xxii. 19; Gen. vi. 3; 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

XII.

PENTECOST.

ACTS II. 1.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

ON this great anniversary our thoughts naturally revert to that first Whit Sunday, now more than 1,860 years ago, when both in outward sign and inward grace the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church to be its Teacher, its Comforter, its Advocate for ever.

The very *date* of that outpouring would seem to be significant, and designed to convey spiritual lessons by the gracious Giver. It was the day of Pentecost. Why, you ask, should the Holy Ghost have been given at Pentecost rather than any other day? Was it a mere chance? Or was it simply that Jerusalem was then full of a mixed multitude of varied nationalities, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judæa, Cappadocia, and so forth; so that these men thus congregated for a while in Jerusalem might convey the seeds of grace far and wide to their own distant homes?

The reason, I think, is deeper than this.

The Feast of Pentecost was one of the three great

national Jewish Festivals. It was especially a Festival of thanksgiving for the wheat harvest. It was called the "day of the first-fruits." A significant part of the offerings of that day was the oblation of loaves of fine flour, the "first-fruits" of the produce of the wheat, which with other offerings were solemnly consecrated and waved before God in His holy temple.[1]

Now, remembering this custom, we can, I think, see some reason why Pentecost was chosen for the descent of the Spirit. Our Lord had previously used a homely illustration in speaking of His death. He had compared Himself with a grain of wheat.[2] He had implied that just as the grain of wheat must die, sink into the earth, and lie there alone before it could germinate and spring up and bring forth fruit; so He too must die, must give His life for mankind, must be laid in the grave, before the great harvest of His toil should appear on the earth. Was it not then appropriate that the first-fruits of our Lord's death, the first-fruits of the Christian Church, should be gathered in on this very day, which was used by the Jews for the oblation of the first-fruits of the wheat? The first Whit Sunday was certainly in a very special sense a "day of the first-fruits," a day full of achievement beyond all expectation, a day which brought with it the promise of possibilities that have never been exhausted.

There is *another analogy*. It has been reckoned from Ex. xix.[3] that the giving of the Law from Sinai was upon the fiftieth day after the exodus from Egypt. If this

[1] Exod. xxiii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 10. [2] S. John xii. 24.
[3] See Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. Pentecost, p. 787.

be so, since the Passover was the national commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, it is not unlikely that the date of Pentecost was fixed by the event of fifty days after, when, in the solitude of the desert, amid the thunders of Sinai, God was pleased to visit His people and make known His will.* Is not the fact therefore full of suggestion that the out-pouring of the Spirit should occur on the *anniversary* of the giving of the Law? The letter (*i.e.*, the Law) and the Spirit are often compared and contrasted in the New Testament. The one is the supplement, and in a sense the antithesis of the other.[1] We cannot then think it was simply a chance parallelism that on the first Jewish Pentecost the moral law should be revealed outwardly to the Jewish Church; while on that other Pentecost, fifty days after the first Christian Passover, the same moral law was re-published, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart, and accentuated in consciences quickened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God. This, at any rate, is the thought which is worked out with much beauty by Keble in the familiar verses for Whit Sunday in the Christian Year.[2]

Thus on this day of Pentecost, this day of the first-fruits, they, the first-fruits of the Christian Church, were waiting in solemn expectation of the promised blessing. Centuries ago that day had been marked by the revelation (not indeed for the first time, but in a specially authoritative manner) of the Eternal Law of the righteousness of God; and yet how difficult that law had

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[2] Hymn 154, Hymns A. & M., "When God of old came down from Heaven."

been to keep, how woefully they had broken it, how often had they deplored their failure. But now they were in expectation of the gift of a power to keep that law such as they had never known before—an outpouring of grace, a bestowal of supernatural energy, that should invigorate their weak wills, and enlighten their dark understandings, and make them new men. This was what they had been taught to expect, and they were not deceived in their expectation.

For "suddenly," we read, "there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."[1] The blessing was expected, and the blessing came.

And the blessing, you will further observe, was of a distinctly *sacramental* character. There was the outward visible sign, and there was the inward spiritual grace. The one was indicative of the other.

What was the *outward* sign? The whole building was convulsed, as by a tempest, and every faithful forehead, even to the outward eye, seemed mitred with celestial flame. Wind and fire—these were the two signs, and they were symbolic of the supernatural energy granted at the same time to the souls of the Disciples.

Now, when we say that these signs were deeply significant, we are not indulging in fanciful analogies, nor in dreamy and in unwarranted mysticism, we are drawing a comparison which the Bible itself supports.

[1] Acts ii. 2, 3.

1. (*a*) *Wind* is a great power, and our Saviour took it as an emblem of the unseen, yet felt, working of the Holy Spirit.[1]

"Here is a noble ship. Her masts are all in; her canvas is spread out; yet no ripple runs by her side, nor foam flashes from her bows, nor has she any motion, but what she receives from the alternate swell and sinking of the wave. The anchor has been weighed; the helmsman stands impatient at the wheel; but there is no progress, and there she lies over the self-same ground, rising with the flowing and falling with the ebbing tide. The cause is plain. They want a wind to raise that drooping pennon, and fill those empty sails. They look to Heaven, and so they may; out of the skies their help must come. At length their prayer is heard. The sails swell; the wind whistles through the rattling cordage; there is a trampling of hurried feet upon the deck; and now, like a steed touched by the rider's spur, she starts, bounds forward, plunges through the waves, and, heaven's wind her moving power, is off and away to the land for which she is bound."[2]

So it is with the soul. The Spirit of God is the great *moving* power. You may have every natural grace and every natural gift—these are but the machinery. It is the Spirit, that mysterious, unseen, yet most powerful Agent Who must call them into action.

(*b*) But wind is more than a motive power, it is a *life-giving* power. A person faints in a hot room. "Take him into the air," you say, "it will revive him."

[1] S. John iii. 8. [2] Guthrie, "Ezekiel," p. 347.

Fresh air—we are at last beginning to recognize it—is the condition of health and energy; vitiated, pre-breathed atmosphere is the handmaid of disease.

Thus also with the soul; the Spirit, the Wind of God, is the life-giving power. Without the Holy Spirit the Christian life, if it can exist at all, is puny and weak. Every revival, whether in Church life or in individual experience, is the work of the Holy Ghost. We do not maintain that His operation is always alike. Like the wind, He moveth "where He listeth." Sometimes hearts are swept as by the blast of a hurricane; more often, like the soft summer breeze, He secretly and silently reanimates and refreshes the soul. But whatever way He works, whether in the tempest or the breeze, He is the Spirit of life and the Spirit of power, and His aid is indispensable to all who will be disciples and apostles of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

2. The other accompaniment of the out-pouring at Pentecost was *fire*. S. John Baptist had already said, "I baptize you with water," but "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."[1] Of this prophecy Pentecost was the fulfilment. The fire was a type. The leading idea is the thought of kindling. Fire not only purifies and refines, it warms, it kindles. Under the Holy Spirit's teaching, the lifeless dogma, the petrified formula, become glowing realities. You read your Bible, and your heart is warmed and cheered in the reading. It is through the Holy Ghost. You come to the Holy Feast, and a strange overpowering sense of

[1] S. Matt. iii. 11.

God's love steals over the soul. It is the Holy Ghost Who sheds that love abroad in your heart. You have been cold, cynical, self-centred; but now you find a new interest in life; you try to alleviate the hardships of the poor and the sorrows of the distressed. What is it that has changed you? The secondary causes may be multiform; but the fire that kindles these new interests is the work of the Holy Ghost.

My friends, it is well that we have our annual Whitday to remind us of the presence and work of the blessed Comforter. An age which denies the personality of evil spirits readily passes on to deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. To deny His personality is sooner or later to deny His power; and when the power of the Holy Ghost is a forgotten truth, a Church becomes first lukewarm, then cold and dead. Of late there has been—we thank God for it—a marvellous increase of activity in our religious life; churches have been rebuilt; multiplied organizations have been set in motion; on every side are signs of progress. But we may well ask, Has there been, is there, a corresponding increase of *inward spiritual power?* or is this activity in the Church but the natural product of a busy and restless age?

Whatever the answer may be, we can scarcely be content with our spiritual attainment. And therefore, on this great anniversary, whether we think silently at home of Him Whose Advent we celebrate, or humbly adore Him in the quiet pauses of our Communion Service, let us pray for a fresh out-pouring of His influence upon us all; that he may come, as the *wind*,

to impel our sluggish wills, to revive our drooping hearts; that He may come, as the *fire*, to kindle a warmer love and more fervent zeal, to burn out the dross of worldliness, of vanity, of self-seeking, to make us true and living witnesses for Christ, filled with the Spirit of God.

XIII.

WHITE SUNDAY.

Ecclus. x. 18.

"Let thy garments be always white."

WHY [illegible] Holy Ghost [illegible] letter [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] were worn [illegible] like [illegible] seasons [illegible] of their [illegible] white robes. [illegible] putting on of [illegible] Sunday. [illegible] passed away, [illegible] office of the [illegible] comes from the [illegible] But the most

Holy Spirit, namely, our Sanctification.[1] To make us holy, to keep us holy, is His blessed work. He is expressly called the "Holy Spirit" and the "Spirit of Holiness."[2] Without His aid we cannot be pure. It will therefore be opportune for us on this *White* Sunday to consider His work of Sanctification in connection with the text, "Let thy garments be always white."

Our Christian profession, according to the New Testament, is a *garment.* It is something which we "put on." It is a livery, and it shows to whom we belong. Thus we are told by S. Paul to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And again he writes, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."[3]

In becoming Christians we, so to speak, adopt the dress of Heaven, and *the dress of Heaven is always white.*

Our Lord, for instance, at the Transfiguration is described as in appearance white, and the Evangelists compare His dazzling radiance with the whiteness of light, snow, and lightning.[4]

In the vision of Daniel, the Ancient of Days is portrayed as One Whose garment is "white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool."[5]

In the Revelation our Lord appears to S. John with "His head and His hairs . . . white like wool, as white as snow."[6]

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [2] Rom. i. 4. [3] Rom. xii. 14; Eph. iv. 24; Gal. iii. 27.
[4] S. Matt. xvii. 2; S. Mark ix. 3; S. Luke ix. 29.
[5] Dan. vii. 9. [6] Rev. i. 14.

The Angels who guard the tomb on the first Easter morn are clothed in white.[1]

The company of the redeemed and glorified Saints have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."[2]

White is the dress of Heaven, and to every would-be citizen of Heaven there comes the call, "Awake, put on thy beautiful garments," and "let thy garments be always white."[3]

White, we repeat, is the dress of Heaven; white is the righteousness of Saints who have "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and when the Apostle speaks of putting on Christ, he is not merely using a picturesque metaphor; he is describing a great spiritual fact. For the Christian life is incorporation in Christ. It is the lost soul clad with the investiture of God. The very word "atonement" means literally, in the Hebrew, a "covering," and the meaning is deeply significant. Christ *covers* us, covers our debts and liabilities, covers our stains and deformities, undertakes to be our refuge, our shelter, our home. God looks down on the believing soul, and sees that soul "covered" in Christ. He "covers" us; this is the meaning of that pregnant expression, "in Christ," recurring with wonderful frequency in S. Paul's Epistles. This is what our Saviour meant when He spoke of the marriage garment which all must wear who come to the Great King's feast. We can know but little of Christian experience if we have never begun to understand something of the fulness of those simple words, "in Christ."

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 3. [2] Rev. vii. 14. [3] Isai. lii. 1.

Men and brethren, is that *your* position—"in Christ," covered by Christ, sheltered in Christ? Or are you like one of old, who stole into the king's presence without the wedding garment? Let each here face the question, Am I in Christ, or am I not? and let your conscience make reply.

I remember once spending a week among the mountains of the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland. For two days we had been enveloped in chilly clouds and cheerless mists. It seemed as if we should never see the sun again. But on the third day, quite suddenly, when least expected, there was a rent in the clouds, and right before us, in the midst of the oval opening, stood the grandest mountain of that magnificent range. It was a wonderful scene. All around was mist and cloud, except for that single rift in front. There it stood in solitary state against the blue sky, its peak pointing upward to Heaven, its sides clothed in the eternal snow, and reflecting the sunshine above.

A beautiful sight. Yes; but it was a parable as well. It was like the Christian soul, clothed in the spotless righteousness of Christ, with the Father's smile resting upon him.

A type, but an imperfect type: a truth, but a truth which needs its complement. If S. Paul speaks of the Christian man as being "in Christ," he also speaks of Christ being in the Christian soul. The baptized and believing soul is "accepted in the Beloved," and "covered with Christ;"[1] but only as his interior state corresponds in some measure to his covenanted position

[1] Eph. i. 6; 2 Cor. v. 17, 21.

can he be said to be what a Christian soul should be. We want inwrought holiness, as well as outward covering: we want righteousness, purity, cleanliness within.

And this is the great work of the Holy Spirit. The blessed Comforter does much for the believing soul. It is through Him we appropriate the blessings of redemption. By Him we acknowledge Jesus as Lord.[1] By Him, through Jesus Christ, we have access to the Father.[2] He it is Who helps our infirmities, Who co-operates with us in prayer,[3] Who comforts and fortifies the soul.[4] All this He does, but one thought rises above all—He is the "Holy" Spirit, the Author of that interior personal holiness, without which no man can see God.

The soul in Christ, this is one aspect of the Christian life. Christ in the soul, that is another.[5] In both processes we will acknowledge the Holy Spirit's work. It is He Who incorporates us in Christ. It is He Who, if we may use the expression, incorporates Christ in us.[6] The indwelling of the Spirit is the indwelling of Christ.

Let us try to grasp in thought this potency of the Christian life. Think of it—God not only with us, around us, but *within* us; not only watching us in secret moments, and reading our hidden thoughts; not only covering us with the shadow of His wings, and irradiating us with the sunshine of His smile; but God *within us;* our bodies His temple; our souls His

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [2] Eph. ii. 18. [3] Rom. viii. 26. [4] Eph. iii. 16.
[5] Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 27; Gal. iv. 19. [6] Rom. viii. 9-11; S. John xiv. 17, 18.

home! Christ in us by the Spirit—what a marvellous thought, what an imperial inheritance! Ah, if we could but grasp it, we should live nobler lives, we should breathe a purer, sweeter, calmer air. Ah, if we could but cherish the Spirit's presence, and listen to His promptings, how much holier and better should we be!

"Know ye not," says S. Paul, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"[1] Can we believe that, and desecrate the sanctities of that most sacred shrine? "Can we suffer the walls of that presence-chamber to be defaced by guilty picturings?" Can we take the members of God and make them the instruments of sin and shame? Shall we not learn to loathe and shun all that will defile the white robe of our Christian character? Shall we not strive to let the Christ within us reign supreme by the grace and help of His own Holy Spirit?

My brethren, I can think of no truth which is a greater incentive to holiness than this wonderful, overwhelming thought—the indwelling of Christ by the Spirit.

We live in a world of difficulty and danger to body and soul. There are sins, which are patent and evident to all; sins which, like fevers, show themselves on the surface of our social life, and are seen and known of all men. There are sins deeply hidden, which, like secret cancers, gnaw away the life within; sins insidiously carrying on their fatal work, which is all the more fatal because it is so deeply hidden. No one who knows

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

the secret sores of modern society, the deplorable state of modern literature, the undercurrent of filth that is poisoning our schools and our homes, can say that it is an easy thing to obey the command, "Keep thyself pure."

What is the remedy? How is society to be purified? How are the white garments to be kept clean from stain and soil? I do not think there is any receipt more likely to be efficacious than those words of the Apostle, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

The present head-master of Harrow,[1] in a sermon recently preached before the University of Oxford, told a story, which I venture to repeat.

There was a famous metropolitan hospital, where, unfortunately, a low and loose tone of morals was prevalent among the students. Various efforts were made by debating societies, by literary clubs, and other agencies to awaken a healthier moral standard; but all were in vain. At last, one of the consulting physicians said, "We have tried all human means, let us now try the grace of God." Prayer meetings were held, at first attended by a few, afterwards by larger numbers. They prayed for purity and holiness. They flung themselves on the aid and power of the Holy Ghost. They besieged the very doors of Heaven, and the answer came. Gradually the ribald jest and the foul blasphemy were hushed, and those men learned the simple lessons of reverence and self-control through the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

[1] The Rev. J. E. C. Welldon.

"Let thy garments be always white"—avoid, shun all that will stain your character and life.

"Let thy garments be always white"—seek increasingly the indwelling of the Spirit of holiness.

"Let thy garments be always white"—you are a citizen of Heaven; see that you live as such. First, let Christ cover you, surround you with His righteousness, encircle you with His love; and then pray, strive, wait, that you may be a living temple of the Holy Ghost.

"Let thy garments be always white"—keep innocency and do the thing which is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last; and thus shall you be of that great company who hereafter shall stand before God in white raiment, having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and shall serve Him day and night in His glorious Temple, the House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

Notes for Bible Readings.

I.

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

(1) *Divine attributes and Divine works are assigned to the Holy Ghost; e.g.* omniscience (1 Cor. ii. 11), omnipotence (1 Cor. xii. 11), omnipresence (Ps. cxxxix. 7).

(2) *The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not remitted* (S. Matt. xii. 31, 32).

(3) *Our Lord was conceived by the Holy Ghost.* If, however, the Holy Ghost were a created being, our Lord would be the Son of a Creature, and not the Son of God.

(4) *The lie of Ananias is convertibly spoken of as a lie to the Holy Ghost and a lie to God* (Acts v. 3, 4). The conjunction of the two phrases implies their identity.

(5) *Christians are described either as temples of God or as temples of the Holy Ghost* (1 Cor. vi. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 16). The indwelling of the Holy Ghost would, therefore, appear to be the indwelling of God.

(6) "*The* LORD *is that Spirit*" (2 Cor. iii. 17). Here "the Lord" is JEHOVAH, the God of Heaven and earth (see Exodus xxxiv. 34). The expression, therefore, tells us that the Spirit is the LORD.

(7) *The Holy Ghost* is named conjointly with the Father and the Son in the threefold benediction, "The grace of the Lord" (2 Cor. xiii. 14), the baptismal formula (S. Matt. xxviii. 19), etc.

For a fuller exposition see *Pearson on the Creed, a.l.*

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE INCARNATE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

(1) *Conception.* "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." S. Luke i. 35.

(2) *Baptism.* "The Spirit . . . descending upon Him." S. Mark i. 10 (*cf.* S. John i. 32, 33).

(3) *Temptation.* "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned . . . and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." S. Luke iv. 1 (*cf.* S. Luke iv. 14).

(4) *Active Ministry.*

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," etc. S. Luke iv. 18.

"Jesus of Nazareth anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," etc. Acts x. 38.

"Jesus . . . rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." S. Luke x. 21, R.V.

(*a*) *Words.* "He . . . speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." S. John iii. 34.

(*b*) *Works.* "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God." S. Matt. xii. 28.

(5) *Death.* "Christ . . . through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself." Heb. ix. 14.

(6) *Resurrection.* "Quickened in the Spirit." 1 Pet. iii. 18 (*cf.* Rom. viii. 11 and Rom. i. 4).

(7) *Resurrection-period.*

"He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments," etc. Acts i. 2.

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (His last gift). S. John xx. 22.

III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Christians (1) live in the Spirit. Gal. v. 25.
„ (2) walk in the Spirit. „ (*cf.* Rom. viii. 4).
„ (3) are led by the Spirit. Rom. viii. 14.
„ (4) are sealed by the Spirit. Eph. i. 13.
„ (5) are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. ii. 22.
„ (6) are transformed by the Spirit. 2 Cor. iii. 18.
„ (7) are strengthened by the Spirit. Eph. iii. 16.
„ (8) pray in the Spirit. Eph. vi. 18.
„ (9) are filled with the Spirit. Eph. v. 18 (*cf.* Acts xiii. 52).
„ [(10) after death—are quickened by the Spirit. Rom. viii. 11.]

IV.

SOME TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

He is (1) The Spirit of Christ. Phil. i. 19. 1 Peter i. 11.
„ (2) „ life. Rom. viii. 2. Rev. xi. 11.
„ (3) „ grace. Heb. x. 29. Zech. xii. 10.
„ (4) „ faith. 2 Cor. iv. 13.
„ (5) „ holiness. Rom. i. 4.
„ (6) „ adoption. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.
„ (7) „ promise. Eph. i. 13.
„ (8) „ wisdom. Eph. i. 17 (*cf.* Isa. xi. 2, etc.)
„ (9) „ truth. S. John xiv. 17; xv. 26. (1 John iv. 6.)
„ (10) „ love, power, and sound mind. 2 Tim. i. 7.
„ (11) „ glory. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

He is also (1) Holy Spirit. Ps. li. 11 (*cf.* v. 10, "right" Spirit).

„ (2) Free Spirit. Ps. li. 12.

„ (3) Good Spirit. Ps. cxliii. 10 ("loving," Psalter). Neh. ix. 20.

„ (4) Eternal Spirit. Heb. ix. 14.

V.

ANTAGONISM AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit may be

(1) vexed. Isaiah lxiii. 10.
(2) grieved. Eph. iv. 30.
(3) resisted. Acts vii. 51-53.
(4) despited. Heb. x. 29.
(5) quenched. 1 Thess. v. 19.
(6) blasphemed. S. Matt. xii. 31.

VI.

SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(1) ***wind.*** S. John iii. 8, *cf.* Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Acts. ii. 2. (Breath, S. John xx. 22.)

(2) ***water.*** S. John vii. 38, 39; iii. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 25 (*cf.* Hosea xiv. 5, "dew").

(3) ***fire.*** S. Matt. iii. 11. Acts ii. 3, 4. S. Luke xii. 49.

(4) ***oil.*** Acts x. 38, "anointed," *cf.* Heb. i. 9. Isaiah lxi. 1. 1 John ii. 20 ("unction").

(5) ***dove.*** S. Matt. iii. 16.

(6) ***seal.*** Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.

(7) ***finger.*** S. Luke xi. 20 = S. Matt. xii. 28 (*cf.* the second Hymn in "*The Ordering of Priests*"—Prayer Book).

VII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN IN ROM. VIII. AND 1 COR. II.

The "spiritual" man (="perfect," Col. i. 28) is one who has attained maturity in the Christian life, and he is contrasted not only with—

(*a*) *the natural and carnal*—*i.e.*, unregenerate and worldly (Rom. viii. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 14), but with—

(*b*) *babes in Christ* (1 Cor. iii. 1).

I.—His status in Christ.

He is freed from the "law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). He is not under the law of condemnation, *i.e.*, the Mosaic law (*cf.* 2 Cor. iii. 6, where "letter"= law), but he belongs to the Dispensation of the Spirit, wherein the pardon of sin is granted through the atoning death of Christ, and where the power of Christ's risen life is communicated to the believer.

II.—His Moral Character.

(*a*) He is "alive unto God," not only theoretically, but actually ("to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace." Rom. viii. 6. For the other fruits of the Spirit, see Rom. xiv. 17, Gal. v. 22).

The possession and maintenance of this spiritual life involves "mortifying the deeds of the body" (Rom. viii. 13). Moreover, spiritual life here bears the potency and promise of Resurrection-life hereafter (Rom. viii. 11), of which the foretaste is already granted by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10—where the real idea is commonly misunderstood: the thought being *not* the impossibility of picturing the future state, but the inadequacy of natural faculties to discern what only the Spirit can reveal).

(*b*) He is guided by the Spirit (Rom. viii. 14), and only those thus guided are true children of God.

Together with this guidance—

(*c*) He has the assurance of Sonship, and filial confidence in addressing God (Rom. viii. 15, 16; *cf.* Gal. iv. 6); and

(*d*) His difficulties and infirmities are helped and supplemented by the Advocacy of the Holy Paraclete (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

III.—His Mental Attitude

(*a*) He minds the things of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 5), *i.e.*, the direction of his thoughts is toward the unseen world (2 Cor. iv. 18).

(*b*) He is specially endowed for the discernment of spiritual Truth (1 Cor. ii. 11-14).

(*c*) He possesses the faculty of sanctified criticism (1 Cor. ii. 15; *cf.* 1 John iv. 1).